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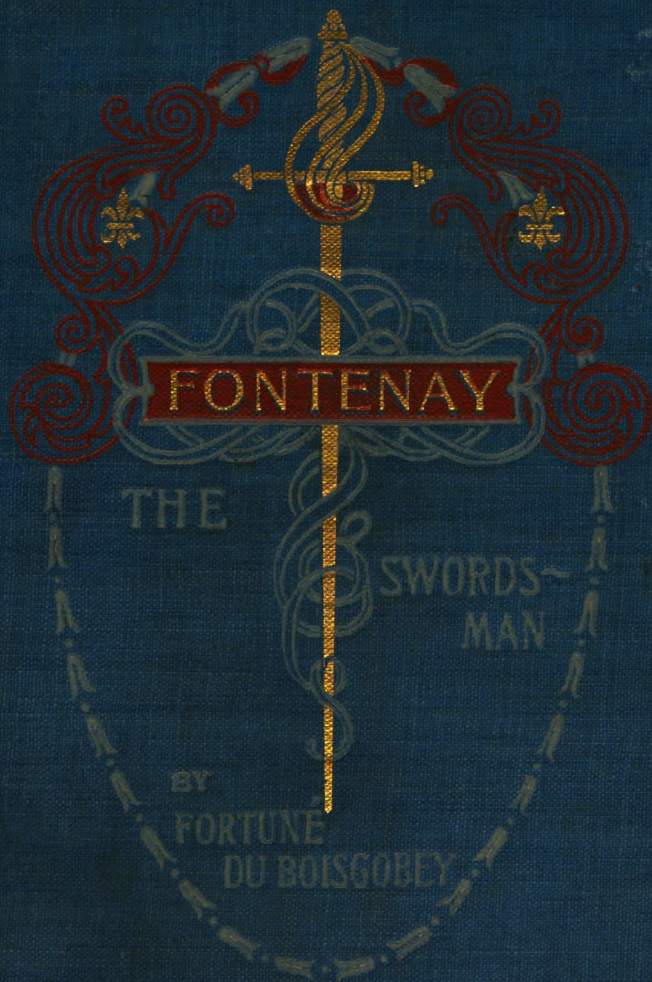
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Fontenay, the Swordsman

A Military Novel

BY

FORTUNÉ DU BOISGOBEY.

TRANSLATED BY H. L. WILLIAMS.

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FONTENAY, THE SWORDSMAN.

CHAPTER I.

A DRAMATIC INTERRUPTION.

It is the autumn of the year 1808, and the declining sun gilds with its slanting beams the lofty trees in Malmaison Park. Then immense and worthy of pride, these gardens were destroyed in 1870, during the Franco-German war. The whole plain of Rueil had been annexed and a lawn spread till out of sight behind the palace, shaded by groves here and there and watered by streams of rapid course which fell in cascades into a limpid lake. Such a diversified garden contrasted strongly with the majestic, set plantations of timber and trimmed boxwood clumps of solemn Versailles. The Empress Josephine wished it thus; she delighted in having it embellished, and preferred, to the splendors of the Tuileries palace, this smiling refuge where she had lived her happiest years when only the first consul's wife.

In 1808, that period was remote when "the *Citoyenne* Bonaparte" reigned over all hearts prior to reigning over an empire as vast as Charlemagne's. The Emperor had been enthroning himself, without her, at Erfurt, among "a pitfall of kings," and, after spending a week in Saint Cloud, he had set out for Spain on the 29th of October.

The Empress had come to Malmaison to enjoy the last fine days of the season, but no longer was it all a holiday at the palace. The horizon was clouding over! Josephine trembled for the life of Napoleon, engaged in the dreadful war where an ambushed *guerillero's* bullet

might strike him at any instant; she trembled for France which he had made so mighty and which vanquished Europe hated as much as it envied; she trembled for herself from foreseeing the misfortune soon to befall her—divorce.

The little court following her, shared her disquiet. No longer was there talk of acting comedies as in 1803, in which the future viceroy of Italy and the future queen of Naples played leading parts; still less of sports on the lawn in which shone the victor of Marengo, his three sisters, three of his brothers and, particularly, Hortense de Beauharnais.

Still among the guests brought by the Empress were some who endeavored to merrily pass the short interval of 'ruralizing." They had musical parties of an evening in the grand gallery on the ground floor; and strolls in the woodland during the daytime when the ladies dressed in white resembled ghosts under the trees.

At the close of a clear November day in the second summer before winter called in France "St. Martin's," two of these guests were walking side by side toward a wooded hill gently rising to a point higher than the chateau. Although it was not warm, neither had cloaks on; but they had no less a handsome appearance though wearing court suits and not the elegant military uniform of the Empress' life-guard officers.

From head to foot the younger was a model of manly beauty, highly prized at that heroic epoch and not in the least resembling the type set in fashion afterward by sentimental literature. Under the First Empire, fops had no success; men were in demand.

This one was a tall youth of twenty, well built and limbed, with shoulders shaped to wear the armor of a mediæval knight, a round head crowned with thick black locks naturally curling, a dark complexion, sparkling eyes and an expressive and energetic physiognomy. He might have stood for a statue of Achilles entering into the battle—an Achilles in knee-breeches and silk stockings.

His somewhat older companion was shorter and less handsome, but he was also well-turned and had a winning countenance

They were conversing with animation—not wrangling, although, by the liveliness of their gestures, it was plain that they did not agree on the subject of their debate.

"My dear Paul," said the elder, though not so old, "I repeat that this duel is nonsensical. I have done my utmost to prevent it, and I only consented to serving as your second in the end, because I have not lost all hope of arranging the dispute."

"On the field? that would be a pretty piece of business! with a slashing swordsman who would take me for a coward and not hesitate to tell me so. It was going too far as it was, to treat me as a raw recruit."

"I did not hear that epithet used."

"Because he dare not to raise his voice in the Empress' presence, but he muttered it between his teeth and I heard it—as others might have done."

"Not Mlle. de Gavre, I'll answer you for it. She was at the other end of the drawing-room."

"Why do you mention that young lady?"

"Because I believe that she delights you—and that you please her."

"Were that true, it would be an additional reason for me not to let myself be insulted by a malapert in her presence."

"You always exaggerate. Commandant Carénac has a rather rude presence and his manners betray the life he has led; but he is a brave and straightforward soldier who won all his grades by brilliant deeds. I am sure that he regrets having offended you."

"However hard he may try to offer excuses, I am not going to accept them. I long to fight with him to prove that his heavy mustaches and airs of a Hector do not frighten me."

"Of course not! I am well aware that you know not fear, but, for the pleasure of showing that nobody daunts you, you run the risk of marring your future. The Emperor does not like duellists, and if he learns that you crossed swords in the grounds of his Malmaison, he is likely to send you back to the West Indies instead of appointing you a sub-lieutenant. The Empress' protection will not preserve you from this disgrace; and it

will be a bad way to show your gratitude for the kindness she has shown you."

This wise speech appeared to make some impression on the colonial hotspur, and the corrective friend might therefore believe for a space that he had succeeded in convincing him of the absurdity of the encounter. It was one hastily decided upon after an exchange of sharp words, and so much off-hand that Paul Fontenay was given no time to change his attire on leaving the concert-room where the quarrel had occurred.

His friend, whose name was George de Prégny, did not hail from Martinique like himself, but was his kinsman and the ward also of the Empress Josephine. He had been lately appointed an auditor to the council of state.

"Well," he proceeded, "would you like me to reconcile you with your adversary? I undertake to make him listen to reason without your good opinion of yourself suffering."

"No," Paul curtly responded. "I might consent if I wore the epaulet, but I am only a civilian yet. I cannot draw back—I shall fight."

"As you like it! I have said all I had to say, and I shall have nothing to reproach myself for if mishap befalls you. One question, now: can you handle a sword well?"

"Do you ask me that? My dear fellow, in the Antilles, we are all first-class fencers—it is born in us."

"Good! but you were sixteen when you came to France, during the peace of Amiens, and I suppose that you have not had any duels yet?"

"Why, I had fought two before I landed! In my first, I three times wounded a naval officer who took the liberty of pulling my ears. Over the sea I was nicknamed 'Fontenay, the Master of Fence.'"

"Plague on it! You began early! But I know that Carénac is a swordsman to be dreaded, and I am sorry you left to him the choice of weapons. But it cannot be helped. Since matters stand thus, I must try to settle with his second to stop the combat at first blood. It is he who brings the weapons, I suppose?"

"Yes; for the excellent reason that I do not know

where to procure any here, no more than to find a battleground—for I do not know the park well and you had to select the spot."

"Indeed, I know it. Do you see the grove of plane trees yonder? It is there I fixed the meeting with your adversary. You are to fight behind the Temple of Cupid."

"I am glad to hear it! The name will bring me good fortune."

"I hope so, but I must own that I need a good deal of encouragement. I am in haste for this foolish business to be finished."

"In that case—dispatch!" concluded Paul, quickening his pace. "I chafe at any waiting."

The winding walk which they followed ended on a meadow, beyond which a glimpse was obtained under large trees of the little edifice with white columns, which Josephine had constructed in 1801, and this walk ran through a rather thick underwood.

All of a sudden, George de Prégny halted, laid his hand on his companion's arm, and said in a low voice:

"How singular! I fancy I hear somebody walking in the wood—when I say walking I mean running, for the twigs snap as if a wild boar were roused from his lair."

"There are no boars in Malmaison Park," replied Paul, listening to the approaching noise.

"I know that," muttered the other. "Is it anybody running after us by chance?"

"Who? and why?"

"The servants, of course—to prevent your fighting!"

"The idea! They would have taken the same alley as we do, instead of breaking through the brush at random."

"That is true. Then it is somebody who has committed an evil act and is running away—a poacher, perhaps—"

"Or a robber. He is making direct for us and we can seize him as soon as he shows himself. Stay where you stand. I will ambush myself behind the trunk of this beech. Now, silence and attention!"

Thus speaking Fontenay advanced a few strides, took

a position next the tree and waited, while his friend held himself close to the hedge border.

They did not have long to wait.

The crackling, after becoming more and more distinct, suddenly ceased, and there emerged from the brush a man's head covered by a broad-brimmed hat and squarely planted on robust shoulders. The fugitive had stopped to look and listen before risking the crossing of the pathway.

The setting sun fully lighted him, and Fontenay, who was not far, had ample time to scrutinize him.

This man had one of those faces never to be forgotten although only seen in a glance—a square, bony face, with prominent cheek-bones and cavernous eyes, shaded by thick brows and shining like burning coals; the whole was framed in a pair of jet-black whiskers cut off at the level of the ear, without beard or mustaches.

He made ready to take such a leap as would clear the path all at once, and Fontenay, who had unsheathed his slight court-sword, was properly posted to run him through in the bound; but Fontenay lost patience and shouted, as he abruptly showed himself:

"Surrender, rascal!"

This premature command produced the opposite effect to that expected. The man perceived the American, but dashed at him. Fontenay received him on the sword's point in the arm, but the blade snapped and the shock he himself received was so severe that he staggered. Before he recovered his balance, the man had thrown himself into the thicket on the farther side of the road.

Fontenay springing after him, Pregny did the same.

A chase commenced through the undergrowth, and the pursuers, being two to one, would have mastered the fugitive if overtaking him, but, though wounded, he ran faster than they did. He would, indeed, have quickly distanced them if he had not run against a stump which made him fall.

Fontenay was closely following him, but at the moment when he was about to grasp the man the latter fired a pistol with the muzzle all but touching his face, and resumed his flight at full speed. Dazzled by the flame which had singed his brows, Fontenay stopped short

and, while not feeling mortally injured, was no longer in the state to pursue the ruffian who had tried to kill him. He lifted his hand to his face and lowered it covered with blood. By a miracle the bullet had deviated, and merely ploughed up the skin instead of fracturing the skull.

His friend George came up, shouting: "Where are you shot?"

"He has not killed me," said Fontenay, "but I cannot see clearly. Try to overtake him."

"The rogue is too far. I am not going to try to catch him while you greatly need my succor," replied Prégny, exerting himself to stanch with his handkerchief the blood flowing from his companion's wound.

"Leave me! it is nothing! Oh, if I could run, the villain should not escape me!"

"I repeat that he has disappeared in the wood. And how does it concern you? Let him go and be hanged elsewhere. It is some vagabond who sneaked into the place to commit a felony. The police will find him."

"Do you take him for a thief? You cannot have seen his face if you fancy that!"

"Scarcely—the daylight is fading and I was twenty paces off."

"Did you not hear the oath he snarled when he rushed on me?"

"No."

"He said: *Caramba!*"

"Well, what does that prove?"

"That he is a Spaniard."

"Do you believe so?"

"I am sure of it; and he looks one, too, with his shaven face and his live-coal-like eyes."

"A Spaniard at Malmaison! its unlikely! What would he come here for?"

"Play the spy or to murder, of course. He was hiding in the grounds when surprised, and he took to his heels. But he will renew the attempt."

"If the Emperor were here, I should not say no, but his majesty is marching upon Madrid and ought to be before Burgos by this time. You are not going to per-

suade me that this fellow was seeking our good Empress to kill her."

"I do not know anything about it, but I will affirm that he has not come for the pleasure of sauntering under the shade in this park. He entered here with evil designs and he will return. Oh, why did I miss him? I tried to pin him on the passage with this confounded tooth-pick, which broke in my hand—all I succeeded in was pricking him in the arm."

"At all events you did wound him and the wound he received will serve to identify him in case he should be arrested. Think no more of the scamp, and come to the house to be attended to."

"To the palace? and what about my duel? You forget that my adversary is waiting for me yonder. I shall be last on the ground and I have no wish to be still later. Let us proceed!"

"But, you luckless fellow, you are not in a fighting condition!"

"Why not? I have only a scratch—it bleeds copiously, but it is nothing."

"It is a hemorrhage and I cannot manage to stop it. So we must go to the palace, for I declare that I will not serve as your second."

"I shall dispense with you."

"I defy you! When the commandant sees how you are hurt he will refuse to stand up against you."

"I shall force him to do it, for he will take me for a coward if I fail in the meeting. Go, if you wish; but I shall meet him."

The sedate Prégny did not know what to do. He had hoped that the pistol-shot would attract the park-keepers and their arrival would prevent the encounter. But the assistance which he wished for was to come from another quarter.

"Be it so," he said. "Let us go on. We have not far to go."

CHAPTER II.

TO A FENCING-MASTER—A MASTER OF FENCE.

At the same time he pointed to Commandant Carénac and his second, who were crossing the lawn at the double quickstep. The second, a foot-officer on duty at Malmaison that day, carried two fighting swords which hampered him in walking so that his principal outstripped him.

"Good!" said Fontenay, on perceiving them also—we need only wait for them. This alley will be a capital place for our making holes in our skins."

"Yours has been lacerated quite enough, and you must be mad to wish to fight immediately."

"Let me alone. The blood has almost ceased to flow."

"We must see what your antagonist thinks of it," observed Prégny, taking the advance to accost the terrible Carénac, who, without giving him time to speak, addressed him in these hardly courteous terms:

"Well, well, gentlemen, it looks as though we had to come after you to cross the blades! This makes ten minutes that I have been kicking my heels under the trees."

"Commandant," interrupted Prégny, "it is not my friend's fault that we are in delay. You must have heard a pistol-shot?"

"There may have been one, but I am so used to them that I did not take any notice. What are you aiming at with your 'pistol-shot?'"

"I mean to say that this duel must be postponed, because M. de Fontenay is wounded."

"Wounded! Where? By some tooth-drawer in the gums, since he is holding his handkerchief to his face," sneered the veteran. "I cannot wait until a regular dentist operates upon him!"

"He was shot at point-blank. Do you not see that his face is blackened with the powder?"

"This is a little too much to believe. Do you hope to gull me into the impression that guerilleros haunt his majesty's park? We are not in Spain! Where is the man who fired the shot?"

"He fled, and—"

"Enough, sir! you are trifling with me, and if your friend refuses to fight, it is you who must account for this rigmarole!"

The auditor of the state council was not the man to suffer such treatment, and he was on the verge of sharply replying when Paul stepped forward and said:

"I am here, sir! after insulting me—do you insult my second by affecting to doubt his word?"

"Nay; now I do not doubt that you are hurt, but I do strongly doubt that anybody wounded you."

"What do you mean by that? Do you suppose I shot myself?"

"Conscripts have been known to cut off a finger to be excused from going to the war," insolently rejoined Carénac.

This time, it was he who went too far. Fontenay was throwing himself upon the rude soldier who thus addressed him when Prégny held him back to prevent an act of violence which would have put his friend in the wrong; but now he no longer sought to stay the duel. He would have sooner fought in person than endured such offences.

Firmly resolved on not yielding his place to him, Fontenay quickly retorted:

"Commandant, you accuse me of falsehood and cowardice. Think what you like of my wound I am able to wield a sword and I will show you so."

The second had come up. The speaker snatched one of the swords he carried and returned to stand before Carénac, saying:

"Are you ready?"

He looked splendid—his visage streaked with blood, his eyes flaming, his head held erect, and the sword point planted in the sod, in the position of an experienced fencer.

The commandant smiled with scorn, but he changed his tone.

"The deuce!" he ejaculated. You are in a great hurry, young man! It strikes me that we may as well doff our coats."

"To what good?" replied Fontenay, unbuttoning his coat. You see that I wear no coat of mail and I do not accuse you of wearing a breastplate under your uniform. Let us finish, I entreat, or I shall believe that you are trying to gain time in hope that my strength will ooze away with my blood."

It was the old soldier's turn to start under insult.

"That is a suspicion which shall cost you dear. I would have been content with giving you a lesson but now I am obliged to kill you. You will make the seventh I have laid low," he said on taking the other sword.

"Enough of your boasting! I am waiting for you."

"A little patience! you will lose nothing," grumbled Carénac, falling into the position of guard with the ease and coolness of a fencing-master.

He had occupied that post in the regiment which he had entered as a private soldier and in which he had won the epaulets after ten years' glorious service.

The sword blades crossed without the seconds having placed them so, as would have happened in a more regular duel.

In spite of the youthful exploits which had gained for Fontenay the war-like surname of "The Master of Fence," George de Prégny augured badly of the issue of this encounter and he made up his mind to intervene at need to stop any close fighting. But nothing betokened that this would ensue as both combatants appeared indisposed to attack sharply. They were soon aware that they were of nearly the same force and they tested one another before charging home.

The American had not boasted; he fenced marvelously well, but his wound did not allow him to prolong this unequal encounter without disadvantage and he was the first to risk a disengagement of his blade so rapid and a thrust along the other's so close that Carénac had much difficulty in parrying it. But he did ward it off and he

was preparing a lightning-like reply-thrust, when varied shouts arose in the underwood.

"He passed here! I see his track!"

"He must have got away by the Jonchère Wood."

"Keep to it, my lads! we must bring him to bay before he scales the park wall."

These voices drew near and the combatants, however fiercely engaged, could not continue before the men who came up at a run in pursuit of the intruder who had shot Fontenay. The two duelists receded from one another and their swords were lowered, to the keenest satisfaction of the state council auditor.

Almost instantly, four park-keepers in the imperial gold and green livery, rushed out into the walk which was the battle-ground, but stopped stupefied on seeing two military officers and two gentlemen in court costume, in attitudes leaving no doubt as to their intentions. These keepers were led by a huntsman of the imperial hunt, a corporal who instantly recognized Fontenay, from having met him more than once in Malmaison palace. He saluted him militarily and asked him, not what he was doing there but if he had seen an individual wearing a broad-brimmed hat.

To which Fontenay replied without hesitating:

"I was so close to him that I tried to seize him and he scorched my face with a pistol-shot."

"That's true, for you are wounded," muttered the huntsman; "but did not the scamp carry a casket?"

"It seems to me that he did bear an object under the left arm which I could not clearly distinguish. But you may give up the chase, for he ran like a roebuck and must be out of reach ever so long ago. You arrive rather behindhand, my honest huntsman."

"It's the fault of an imbecile gardener who saw him slip out of the palace by a servant's door, but instead of shouting 'stop thief,' he let him pass. It was ten minutes before I was notified by a chamber-maid who found the apartment of one of her majesty's maids of honor turned upside down."

"This is what I thought," muttered the auditor; "the chateau is badly guarded. If his majesty only knew this—"

"Run, you fellows!" roared the huntsman, "and if you do not overtake him, notify the Rueil gendarmes. We have his description—give it to the chief officer and let him send all his men afield. We must catch this burglar!"

Away dashed the keepers at once, some into the thicket and the others over the lawn, but their commander stayed behind. His legs were older than when he was twenty and he was not sorry to recover breath while pretending to gather information.

Not interesting himself at all in the story of the theft, Carénac had stepped aside, only awaiting the old forester's departure to renew the combat.

"I knew well enough that the fellow was not a conspirator," said Prégny in an undertone. "He has only stolen a jewel-case—he is a vulgar thief."

"Being one does not prevent his being the other," grumbled Fontenay. "How," he proceeded, addressing the corporal—"how did he manage to steal into the palace which is full of guests to-day."

"We suppose he sneaked in at dusk yest'reen, hid himself in some cellar corner and came forth to make his swoop while her majesty and her suite were at the concert."

"I hope he has not killed anyone?"

"No, because nobody dropped in to disturb him while he was thieving; but if anybody had surprised him searching the drawers, I reckon that he would not have shrunk from using the dagger."

"Certainly not! for he fired on me because I tried to bar his way. He has one of those faces one would not like to spy in a dark wood. By its swarthy hue and his dress, I took him for a Spaniard."

"That he may be! They are a folk who do not like the French and they hate our Emperor. I will double the patrols to-night—but I do hope that my men or the mounted constables will lay hand on him this evening."

"Has the Empress been informed of what has happened?"

"I dare say she has, by this time, as well as the young lady whom the burglar despoiled."

"Oh, the loser is a young lady, eh?"

"Yes, monsieur, a young lady who has been her majesty's reader these two years—one you know right well; a tall lady with a figure as slender and supple as a reed and with such eyes as I never saw the like of!"

"Her name?" sharply inquired Paul.

"I—I do not remember. But any of the palace officials will tell you."

Paul was going to insist, for he almost guessed who was in debate and he had private reasons to want his doubts cleared up; but Carénac broke into the parley by roaring as if he had been at the head of his squadrons:

"Corporal, advance to receive orders!"

The ex-soldier hastened to obey. He stood at "carry arms," before the superior officer, whose shoulders bore the insignia of his rank, and who roughly demanded:

"Why are you lingering here? Why are you not with your men?"

"I am going to join them, commandant," faltered the huntsman; "this gentleman was questioning me and I thought I might—"

"You are on duty, and when on duty a man ought not babble with the civilians he may meet. Right about face! wheel! and do not let me see you again, for if you hang around here, I shall make my report to your chief."

Packed off in this style, the poor fellow wheeled round without replying, but Fontenay intervened.

"I beg your pardon," he coldly said, "I am not on duty, and I am only a civilian; consequently I am not bound to receive orders from you and you will be pleased to let me learn a fact interesting me."

"Oh," jeered the veteran, "I know that you are not in a hurry to resume our interrupted explanation. Pray learn all you can, therefore, but do so quickly, or I am not at your orders either, and if you continue to drag out an affair which ought to have been settled before this, I shall leave you, *sharp!*"

At this moment, the corporal, on his way by Fontenay, said to him:

"I remember the name now of the reading lady who was robbed. It is Mlle. de Gavre."

The commandant did not hear this name which caused Paul Fontenay to start, but George de Prégny heard it

very plainly; he understood what his companion must feel and it seemed a good opening for him to risk a final attempt at conciliation.

"Commandant," said he to Carénac, "my friend has proved to you that he does not refuse to fight. He is still quite ready, but night falls—one cannot see clearly and you may both lose your lives by a blunder if you recommence now. This is why, without consulting my principal and as the second, I take it upon myself to propose a postponement till to-morrow."

"I should not oppose it if the thing were possible," coldly answered the other, "but I am quitting Malmaison this evening and I must be on the road to-morrow morning to join my regiment in the army of Aragon. It has already gone into action at Burgos without my being in my place. I have no desire to miss the campaign by waiting on your friend's good pleasure. Let us, then, have done now and here, or let it rest. I cannot force your friend to stand up, sword in hand, if his heart does not back him!"

This final slur stung the American like a whip-lashing, although he would willingly have accepted the postponement proposed by Prêgny for, since the huntsman had named Mlle. de Gavre, he thought of none but her, and he was eager to learn that no other injury had been done to her save the robbery. But the intractable veteran seemed to accuse him once more of lacking courage. He could govern himself no longer, and, forgetting the lady whom he loved, he stood on guard.

"Defend yourself!" he called out, bluntly.

And rushing on his adversary he attacked him with so much fury that Carénac had great difficulty in avoiding a straight lunge. Fontenay no longer thought of guarding himself—only of killing his man, and in a game of that kind, the end would speedily be the death of one or both of the contestants. His cheek still bled, so that he had the appearance of a wounded lion.

All of a sudden at the height of the engagement, just as the colliding blades were clanging like iron beaten on the anvil, Carénac made a side leap which carried him out of reach, and he flung his sword into the copse.

CHAPTER III.

AN ENGAGEMENT OF HEARTS.

The stupefied Fontenay was compelled to stop. His back was turned to the lawn and he did not see what was visible to the man who had faced him. He believed that the latter fled and he was about to apostrophize him caustically when Prégny hastily urged him:

"Do the same! throw down your sword!"

Still Paul did not understand, so his friend snatched it from his grasp and hurled it into the briars. The commandant's second had drawn himself up by the path border in the attitude of a soldier to be passed in review by his general.

Fontenay wondered if they had not all suddenly become mad, but, on turning round, he comprehended all.

Twenty paces from where the duel was taking place the alley ended on the lawn enframed by the wood, and from that side came a group, or rather a cortege at the head of which walked a figure whom Fontenay recognized at the first glance.

"The Empress," he muttered.

It was Josephine preceding several courtiers, and followed at a distance by a platoon of grenadiers. She was accompanied by two ladies of honor. She would have been recognized without this brilliant escort. So much majesty and graciousness could only belong to the lovable West Indian who was Napoleon's good genius.

Although in her five-and-fortieth year, she did not appear in her thirtieth. Her eyes enchanted and her smile charmed. She was most simply attired with that exquisite taste and supreme elegance of which she alone possessed the secret. One bowed to the woman in her, rather than to the sovereign.

The rough warrior Carénac, who had thrown aside his

steel on seeing her appear, was not the least agitated of the four actors in this scene.

No doubt it was fated that their twice interrupted duel should never be finished, for neither of the pair would have dared give the sight to the Empress, and they all four trembled for fear that she would divine what they were doing when thus surprised.

She came over the lawn by skirting the edge of the underwood and walked up the path where they had been fighting, upon descrying them.

Quickly though they had desisted, they could scarcely expect her not to have noticed the flagrant offense, and they waited like school-boys caught red-handed by the master. More than the other, Fontenay was abashed, for she had overwhelmed her fellow-countryman with favors, and he would have sooner died than displeased her.

He cast down his eyes and he forgot to wipe away the blood, smearing his cheek and showing only too plainly that his stroll outdoors had not been pacific. It was evident that the evening breeze had not brought this excess of color upon his temple! What he feared most of all, did not fail to arrive.

"Oh, gracious heaven!" exclaimed Josephine in that golden voice which thrilled all hearts, "you are wounded, my dear Paul!"

He did not know how to reply although not deficient in readiness, and having the habit of being so addressed as he had long lived in the Empress' private court where she treated him as a spoiled child. It was Prégny who spoke to explain the case.

"Madame, Paul has been wounded by a malefactor whom he tried to arrest," began he.

He had immediately divined that, whatever precautions they had taken, she must suspect them of meeting here for a duel, and he endeavored to divert her from this idea, knowing well that her Majesty, no more than her august husband did not like life to be risked anywhere save on the battle-field.

"A malefactor!" she repeated; "no doubt, the one my guards were pursuing? then the gunshot that was heard—"

"It was fired at me, madame," said Fontenay, "but it

hardly did more than touch me. Unfortunately the villain escaped."

"The important thing is that you were not killed. *We* should never have been consoled for your death."

By emphasizing the word "we," the kind Josephine withdrew herself to bring forward a person who had kept respectfully behind her, but who was now taken by the Imperial hand to be literally placed in view.

Fontenay could not restrain an outcry.

This person was Mlle. Marguerite de Gavre, pale with emotion, but more beautiful still from her pallor. She looked bewitching in her white dress, with her ashen hued fair hair and large black eyes full of fire which, however, she durst not raise upon the valiant young man who had attacked a bandit armed to the teeth.

"Do you hear this, my dear Marguerite," went on the Empress. "It is not Fontenay's fault that the wretch was not taken. At least, he has impeded his flight; my people are on his track and I trust that you will recover possession of your property."

"I would have preferred losing it, to M. de Fontenay's receiving a wound," murmured the girl, whose cheeks were colored by a significant flush.

Josephine smiled as she watched the loving pair, who interested her on different accounts.

Paul Fontenay, born like her in Martinique, was the only son of one of her friends in childhood. Marguerite de Gavre's mother was Spanish but her father was a general who died gloriously at Austerlitz while leading into fire a brigade of the *Grande Armée*. Josephine, who had cherished the orphan had thought of making two persons happy and she did not despair of success.

"I have good news to tell him," she softly resumed.

"I have just received a courier from the Emperor, who brings a commission of sub-lieutenant for Paul Fontenay."

Paul did not try to conceal his joy; it was his dearest dream realized.

"Do not congratulate yourself too much," added Josephine, smiling. "You are to be attached to his Majesty's staff and you are required to start immediately to join him."

"I will go to-morrow!" ejaculated Paul, without remarking the shade of sorrow clouding the girl's charming countenance.

"To-morrow, my dear Paul, I will hand you a private letter for the Emperor. You will start the day after, by which you may arrive soon enough to enter Madrid together with him." Remembering that she was not alone with her favorite, and thinking it time to be the Empress again, Josephine inquired:

"Who are these gentlemen?"

This question applied to Carénac and his second who played characters without speaking parts, and who wished nothing so heartily as to be miles away. The cavalry officer hastened to make known his name and position.

"Ah," said the Sovereign, "you are the commandant who arrived yesterday with dispatches for the war ministry. I am obliged to you for having requested to be presented to me before returning to the army. You were at the concert and, in stepping out into the park for the cooler air, you met M. de Fontenay—by chance?"

"Ye-es, I—I met him, your Majesty, quite by chance," stammered the disconcerted Carénac.

"She sees that they were having a fight," thought Prégny.

The cavalry commander did not wait for any sequel. He awkwardly saluted the Empress and retired, followed by his second, but, on passing near Fontenay, he whispered:

"It is only put off, young man; we shall meet again in Spain."

The American did not reply as he might have been overheard; but the glance he darted upon the vindictive dragoon, clearly showed that he accepted this challenge, renewed for the other side of the Pyrenees. Carénac and his supporter disappeared round the turn of the walk. The imperial retinue kept at a respectful distance. The two friends stood alone in presence of the Empress and Mlle. de Gavre who had not left her.

"Are you satisfied, my dear Paul?" inquired the Sovereign.

"I bless the Emperor and your Majesty," exclaimed Fontenay.

"Do not thank me—you are going to incur great dangers, but we shall pray to heaven for you. I hope that it will protect you, and that, should your blood be shed again, it will be for France! It is full time you won your spurs," added the good-hearted Josephine wittily. "Idleness does not become your age or disposition. I do not wish to know what you came to do in this grove with the brave soldier who has just left us, but I depend on your fighting in Spain solely against the enemies of your country."

Paul hung his head under this merited rebuke, and did not try to deny what the speaker had divined.

"Marguerite also depends on this," she pursued. "The theft of which she is the victim brought me to this nook in the park. But it is an ill wind blows nobody good, and that misfortune led me into arriving in time to interrupt a thorny debate. Let us speak no more of it," she concluded, though Paul remained silent. "The Emperor will not know and I shall forget it. Let us speak of the success awaiting you abroad. I have answered for you, and the Emperor, who does not spare the actors in his perilous commissions, will not haggle about the recompense. Depart, then, with the assurance that you will receive still another reward after the war."

Paul, deeply stirred, looked at Marguerite de Gavre, and read in her eyes that she did not disavow her Sovereign's promise. He would much rather have heard it from her lips, but he could not question her.

"While waiting that happy day," continued the Empress, "I will receive you to-morrow, my dear Paul, and perhaps charge you with a commission which I am certain will not displease you."

"May I ask your Majesty if it is true that the scoundrel who wounded me robbed Mlle. de Gavre of a casket?"

"Which contained important documents? Yes. It is only too true. The loss is a serious one, but not irreparable. Mind, to-morrow! Oh, I forgot to mention that you should travel by post-chaise as far as the frontier, but at Bayonne will find saddle-horses and equipment. I have provided everything, and I consider myself happy in enabling the son of my girlhood's friend to properly enter the campaign. Now, my dear Fontenay, before

you win your spurs come and let me dub you knight!"

She held out her hand graciously to the budding sub-lieutenant who went down on one knee to kiss it. When he had done this, but before he had risen, she beckoned her reader to come forward and Paul touched the tips of the girl's fingers with his lips. Both understood that their patroness was betrothing them.

Marguerite thought no more of the danger she had run of being assassinated by the ruffian who had entered her rooms, and Paul as little of the dangers he was going to confront in Spain. They only thought of their happiness, in which they could hardly believe.

Josephine felt that she could not more artistically close, than by this incident, the interview which overflowed the hopeful cup of the lovers whom she encouraged. She dismissed Paul and George with a smile and a wave of the hand, the latter having modestly kept in the background; with slow steps she took the return path to the palace, like a benevolent fairy vanishing after having united the persecuted Princess to Prince Charming.

Our Prince Charming kept her in view till she had gone round the corner of the hedge, whereupon his delight burst out like a song of triumph.

"What a sovereign!" he exclaimed, "what a happy fellow he is who gets killed on her behalf!"

"That's a very mean way to prove your gratitude!" said George, laughing. "She will be much more pleased if you march home safe and sound with another epaulet, or the cross of the Legion of Honor upon your breast—ay, and Mlle. de Gavre likewise.

"I'll try! but I vow that I am not going to spare myself in slashing away with a good heart at the Spanish, if only to revenge myself on that one who marked me on the face."

"Always admitting that the rogue is Spanish."

"Do you still doubt it after what you hear? Why he came from his country expressly to rob Mlle. de Gavre, who is Spanish, on the mother's side."

"That is no reason—any more than the oath he uttered in firing upon you, and which you assert you understood."

"Well, I should think I did understand it! Before I came to France I passed three years in the Havana Col-

lege, and I speak Spanish as well as French, not to say English like any North American."

"That may serve you finely in the army you are to join, and help you to be remarked by his majesty. Let me tell you, dear fellow, that I envy your fate! Oh! if, like you, I could be attached to the Emperor's staff! I would not mourn for my place in the state council and, by my faith! if the campaign should be prolonged I mean to plot and plan to be sent there with the council's dispatch-box, which her majesty receives from Paris every week. But I shall have no such luck! Before a month you will be marching into Madrid, and the treaty of peace will be signed on New Year's day."

"Who can tell? Those men are defending their country, and they can live on raw onions. They may hold out a long time and it will be hard work to bring all to an end. Not that I shall be sorry for that, as it will give me time to win the grades."

"The grades? In the plural?" smilingly questioned George de Prégny.

"Why not? my fellow West Indian, Jacques de Servon, is already a colonel and he is only twenty-seven. Besides, I shall console myself for not having so rapid an elevation if I marry Mlle. de Gayre."

"That's good! You no longer conceal the fact of your loving her; now it will not be still supposed that you seek her for her fortune, if is true that she has just lost it. I suppose we must believe so since the Empress says it."

"Well, I will give her another, for I intend to become a general!"

"The boon I wish you—if no bullet checks you in full career! You play a heavy stake, but you are born under a lucky star and I hope that you will go through this Spanish campaign without harm where it appears every rock screens a bravo! Dreadful tales are told of soldiers maltreated."

"Be tranquil. I am not going to let them capture me. They may kill me, but I defy them to torture me, for I shall not be taken alive."

"I shall not be at ease until you arrive there. Promise to write me."

"It is agreed. The puzzle is: will you get my letters? The couriers are often done to death on the highways, even those coming from the Emperor's headquarters. However, I will profit by all occasions to give you news—on condition that you do the like."

"News of me and a lady you are interested in; I formally pledge myself, and I am ready to serve you here if the case arises."

"Thank you, George! We are now friends for life. I shall see you to-morrow, after the Empress' reception of me, shall I not?"

"We will have dinner together in Paris, and on the day after to-morrow I will help you into your post-chaise, since you are going to travel like a senator of our empire. For the present, let us go indoors, if you believe I can talk sensibly. Your cheek is no longer bleeding; but you are not presentable. I will take you to the surgeon on duty and it will not show a scar in three or four days."

"I should not be vexed if there remained a pretty scar."

"Heaven forbid, my friend! The Emperor would inquire in what action you were wounded and you would be mightily embarrassed to reply. I should not advise you to tell him the truth. On the other hand," added the state council auditor, "I recommend your getting it dressed as soon as possible on our arrival at the chateau."

While chatting, the young gentlemen had made good way. Their road was not the same as that the Empress and her escort had followed, but they reached the skirt of the wood and they saw them afar, entering the residence; its windows were already lighted up, as night had completely fallen.

Rueil church bell sounded the *Angelus*—the bell to which Bonaparte, when only the first consul, liked to listen in the evening, and which he still remembered on St. Helena. Those sweet and saddening notes had announced his future greatness. What did they foretell to Paul Fontenay on the eve of his departure for a war from which he was not sure of returning? The brave man's death in the front of the foe—or glory and conjugal happiness?

Our American was not inclined to brown study and yet he paused the better to hearken to the sounds, and his friend, who read his mind, allowed him to muse at this moment when his destiny was to be decided.

Fontenay thought of the adorable girl whom he loved, and perhaps would never behold again. He prayed to heaven for her, since he might not survive that war which would devour so many heroes, and for his death, if he should fall, to be honorable.

Suddenly the music came to him of "*Pasant pour la Lyrie!*" played by the life-guards' band in salute to the Empress returning into the palace.

Fontenay raised his head and his eyes flashed. He believed this call to the crusades was the response of heaven; that he might set out for Spain without fear and regret with it watching over him.

The die was cast. He must conquer or fall.

CHAPTER IV.

A HOSTILE HOST.

"Tournesol!"

"Yes, lieutenant?"

"Is the flask empty?"

"No, lieutenant; there's enough left for a drink or two."

"Pass it over. I want to warm myself."

Tournesol, the cavalry orderly, spurred his charger and held out to his officer the water canteen unhooked from his saddle-bow.

"Only to think that those noodles in Paris fancy that Spain is a hot country," grumbled the lieutenant, after having drunk.

"An odd sort of hot country! where all the mountains are covered with snow in November—I never had an idea of that, though there are grapevines, and comrades told me this morning that the cellar is full of wine in that tavern where our day's ride finishes—the one before us! From the distance, it does not look inviting and it is my opinion that we shall not be better accommodated than at Lerma, where we slept last night."

These sentences were exchanged between Paul Fontenay and a trooper of the Thirteenth Cuirassiers, who served him as orderly, on a road bordered by poplar stripped of leaves by the winter, a couple of hundred paces from the pretty town of Aranda de Duero, eighteen leagues from Burgos and twenty-five from Madrid.

Overwhelmed with the Empress' boons, our American gallant found two excellent horses at Bayonne, and an order for five hundred napoleons on the army paymaster, who paid him two hundred on account for his immediate necessities. Paul carried these in his belt and he had

recruited, to serve him during the campaign, a tall Gascon, as dry as a match. He was Jean Tournesol, recently discharged from the military hospital, into which a kick from a horse had sent him.

Fontenay could only applaud himself on the choice. Jean Tournesol was a well-tested soldier and a "knowing" servant—one who can "see through the fog," a *debrouillard*, as modern military slang expresses it. Furthermore, to endear him to the creole, he had not only gone on the cod-fishing cruises to Newfoundland but to the West Indies to sell the cured cargo, and he was thus able to speak with familiarity of scenes and places in the French colonies where Paul was born. Nothing put Tournesol in a quandary; he "clawed out of every squall," so to say, and though he did not speak Spanish in the least and understood it less, anyone would have thought he knew Spain thoroughly.

His flaw was to be too garrulous, but Fontenay was not sorry to converse with him a little to abridge the length of interminable rides through a deserted and desolated land.

As far as Burgos, the new second lieutenant had marched with the detachments going to join their corps. The Emperor had made a stay there, but he had gone on, and Fontenay, impatient to present himself, had determined to push on alone with his orderly.

The roads were not safe, but the passing army had left rear-guard posts in almost every village and the enemy had fallen back upon Madrid to defend the pass in the mountains separating Old and New Castile.

Fontenay had made no unpleasant meetings yet and had manfully supported abominable lodgings such as Lerma offered him on the night before this 28th of November.

He had never felt more blithe or readier for anything. He treasured the memory of Marguerite de Gavre whom he had seen again on the eve of his departure, and the hope sustained him. He was simply eager to confront the most serious dangers, see war, of which he knew solely the hardships, and distinguish himself under the great Napoleon's eyes. He was only a day's march from him, before Aranda and at the foot of the *Sierra*, formi-

dably entrenched, which he might attack on the morrow.

Fontenay shuddered at the idea of arriving too late. Day was declining when he reached the outermost houses in Aranda, a wretched hamlet in ruins which seemed to be abandoned by its inhabitants, for not one was to be seen in its dark and tortuous streets. None but tattered beggars roamed alongside the dilapidated dwellings. No doubt the rest were hiding in order to see nothing of the invaders.

Fontenay, who suspected as much from previous experiences, drew from his holster a *billet*, or order for lodging, issued to him at Lerma, and he set to deciphering, not, without trouble, a long string of Spanish names:—

"Don Inigo de Barrameda, Marquez de Santa Cruz, y Tordesillas, y Pardilla, y Milagros—"

"There's a promise of *ease*," interjected Tournesol, who always would have his jest.

"Silence in the ranks!" commanded Fontenay, though laughing at the forced pun. "This nobleman with so many names lives in Vine Street or Wine Street—*calle de las Vinas*—as you please."

"Wine for me," said the orderly in an undertone, for he highly valued the wine of Aragon.

"We must find out this street."

Urging his horse up to one of the mendicants sunning himself in the last rays, he questioned him in good Spanish, though the accent may have been softened by his transatlantic origin and training. The man did not condescend to unlock his jaws but pointed with one finger to a house as massive as a fortress and a little less knocked to pieces than the others.

Fontenay tossed him a piece of money and rode his horse into the Vine Street, followed at the regulation distance by Jean Tournesol. They dismounted before the designated mansion where the orderly held the horses while his officer examined the front and the door; it had, the appearance of a palace deserted by noble masters. The windows had no glass left, but the balconies retained their carvings and above the portals an enormous stone escutcheon remained intact, surcharged with armorial bearings.

Fontenay rapped with the pommel of his sword. A

grated wicket opened a little and a voice roughly asked: "What do you want? (*que quiere usted*)" to which Fontenay answered by exhibiting his order for lodging.

The wicket banged shut, the bolts were drawn and the door partially opened to let a man show himself.

He was costumed like the Barber of Seville in the opera; velvet waistcoat and knee breeches, silk stockings and a handkerchief for skull-cap on the head. He was going on for sixty years of age but he was as straight as the capital I, and he wore a lofty mien notwithstanding his theatrical attire.

Without waiting for Fontenay to explain his errand, he beckoned him to follow into an immense room, furnished with a worm-eaten table and some rickety stools, after which he retired, mumbling the stereotyped speech used in Spain to imply that everything under that roof was at the visitor's disposal—"A la disposicion de usted."

By prior experience Paul knew that he ought not take this polite phrase seriously, and he did not for a single instant doubt that it was equivalent in that discontented *hidalgo's* mouth to sending him among the foul fiends below.

Don Inigo de Barrameda—for it was he who had personally received him—naturally cursed the invader's of his country and only submitted to the vanquishers law under force and constraint. He left his guests to "fight out" the welcome with an old hag of repulsive uncomeliness, half-servant, half-duenna, as thickly bearded as a man and afflicted with a stumpy nose, studded with moles.

Tournesol who had fastened the horses to rings set in the wall, came in and incontinently began to try taming this virago by speaking to her in that universal tongue of old sailors and campaigners, the *lingua Franca*. He wasted his learning. The beldame affected not to understand, and Fontenay was obliged to use pure Castilian to ask for supper to be cooked and the stables to be pointed out to his servant. She appeared very much surprised to hear one whom she took to be a "dog of a Frenchman" speak her tongue so correctly, but she only sulkily obeyed.

Tournesol was conducted by her under a shed where he could give his horses the feed he had luckily brought,

for there was no hay in the rack or grain in the manger. The sullen witch shuffled back to the officer to announce that she would attend to his supper. She lighted a pitch candle in an iron socket and disappeared.

Fontenay did not pine for the society of the bearded beauty and went in search of his man. He found him grooming the steeds, which stood in great need of care and food, after nine hours' march on deeply rutted roads.

Tournesol had lost not a jot of his good temper, and he enlivened his superior with jokes upon the costume of Don Inigo, who seemed to have dressed himself as Figaro to greet the French guests. He had discovered a low room, furnished with fresh straw, where his lieutenant might sleep in case the ferocious noble should not offer a more suitable sleeping chamber.

Fontenay was in the mood to content himself with restricted hospitality, and as he was very hungry, he did honor to the *puchero* which the old woman served up to him in an earthen pot, to be eaten with a wooden spoon. There was some left for Tournesol, who declared that this pease pottage did not come anywhere near a dish of *burgoo*.

Satisfied and fatigued, his lieutenant was talking about going after the summary repast, to rest on the litter which seemed all the bed he could expect, when he was greatly astonished to see the master of the house enter. He was followed by the duenna, carrying a bottle and two glasses which she set on the table.

Don Inigo seemed transfigured. His manner was almost winning, but Paul soon had the explanation of the miracle as the marquis said that, having learnt from his housekeeper that his guest spoke his language, he felt bound to come and converse—further, to drink with him as became courteous enemies.

Fontenay was willing enough to learn what this typical Spaniard thought of events during the war and he warmly accepted the tardy but polite offer. He little foresaw the turn the unexpected dialogue would take.

Don Inigo de Barramedas, after taking a place at table, facing his guest, gravely filled both glasses and, tossing off his at a draught, said, in his own tongue:

"Senor Frenchman, I drink first to prove to you that

this old wine made on my own estate, is not poisoned, as you might have believed."

"The thought is one that never came to me," protested Fontenay, drinking in his turn, without leaving a drop of this nectar poured out by an enemy's hands.

"I am obliged to you for not suspecting me. I hate the invaders of my country, but I wish to wage only a fair war upon them."

"I believe you, my lord marquis."

"How do you know that I am a marquis?" brusquely inquired the host.

"On my warrant is written Marquez de Santa Cruz—*y otros locos!* I am not a nobleman myself, but plain Paul Fontenay."

"But you are not a Frenchman."

"I come from the French West Indies, Martinique."

"Is not that the island where your Empress was born?"

"The same. I am her fellow-countryman, and it is by reason of her patronage that I am going to join the French army as an officer attached to the Emperor Napoleon's household."

A silence ensued. Don Inigo seemed to hesitate about putting another question trembling on his lips.

"Napoleon left Aranda yesterday I believe?" resumed Fontenay.

"He passed here two days ago and should arrive this evening at Somo Sierra—where he is waited for."

"By the Spanish? They will make a stand this time I suppose and the encounter will be a hot one. I shall try to be in it."

"I wish you to come out of it, but I hope your army will be destroyed."

This double wish, so bluntly expressed, made the young officer smile, and he observed with more curiosity the strange person who, while hobnobbing with a French soldier, proclaimed his desire for all other French to be annihilated.

"You are looking at my dress," smilingly inquired Don Inigo. "I have not always worn it, but I shall not cast it off until the day when the stranger is driven off the soil of my native land. This is my mode of protesting against the invasion. I am no longer of the age to defend

Spain, with sword in hand, but I am still ready to sacrifice my life and fortune for her."

"In the same way as I am ready to die for my mother country," rejoined the lieutenant.

"In which, we should each do our duty," concluded the hidalgo. "Let us drop this sad subject."

"I ask nothing better; only in our position toward each other, of what can we speak?"

"Of things of my country and yours. I lived a long while at the court of our good King Carlos IV. and I have participated in many events."

"Which will certainly interest me if your lordship would kindly relate them."

"I held a post in the palace and should do so now if my unfortunate sovereign had not fallen into the trap your Emperor laid for him at Bayonne—"

"Here I must bid you pause my lord Marquis," interrupted the West Indian. "You are venturing on delicate ground—where I refuse to follow you, for I am a devoted soldier and a passionate admirer of Napoleon."

"Quite right," muttered Don Inigo. "Well captain, tell me about Paris. I visited it before your revolution."

"You will find it greatly changed."

"Oh, I have not the least longing to return, but I am not indifferent to what goes on there. No doubt you come from it?"

"Straight. I was there only a fortnight ago—at least, at Malmaison."

"Your Empress' summer resort, is it not?"

"Yes, my lord, where I spent the whole of a week."

"Then you should know the members of her retinue?"

"Not all, but I know more than one."

"Are you acquainted with Mlle. de Gavre?"

A thunderbolt falling into the wine glass which he had just emptied would not have produced a more prodigious effect upon the American than this question delivered at close quarters by a Spaniard, in the hall of the old mansion in Aranda in the heart of a hostile country. He was so astounded that he did not respond.

"I ask you this," went on the marquis, "because the young lady is of Spanish origin. Her mother came from Teruel, a town of Aragon, not very far from here. She

married a Frenchman, who belonged to the army as you do and became a general. He was killed in one of your battles in Germany."

"Austerlitz," observed Paul.

"I was told that the Empress Josephine had taken care of her daughter."

"She attached her to her person as reading woman."

"So this girl has become wholly French who counts among her maternal ancestors the famous Isabella of Segura who died of grief upon her affianced husband's bier—in the thirteenth century, in the reign of King Don Jayine of Aragon."

Fontenay, as an American, had never heard Isabella of Segura named, or this legend mentioned of "the Lovers of Teruel," though celebrated throughout Spain, and he had reasons to think that Marguerite de Gavre was ignorant of her illustrious ancestress' story, for she was born in France and her mother died in childbed. But, without suspecting it, the noble Marquis had sharpened the curiosity of the lieutenant who thought it a good chance to inform himself upon the family of the lady he loved. In the course of the farewell audience which the Empress granted him, she had not been explicit on this head—perhaps because she was no better informed.

"Has Mlle. de Gavre any substantial interests in Spain?" he inquired.

"Most important ones. A fortune deposited in the Bank of Madrid, considerable real estate, the whole inheritance of an uncle who died about six months ago and forgot to cut her off! Events have prevented her entering into possession. She may never do so—and I hope, ardently, that this splendid windfall will never pass into French hands. She also has claims upon the treasure of the Seguras, hidden wealth spoken of in the olden chronicles, but, if it exist, it will never go out of Spain for nobody knows where it is buried."

While Don Inigo was descanting, light spread by degrees in his hearer's mind. He recollected the robbery in la Malmaison just before his departure and he was already inflamed with the hope of re-encountering the thief who had escaped the searches of the French police. He hastened to inquire of the marquis if Mlle. de Gavre

had any relatives in Spain, and the nobleman replied, after a little hesitation:

"There is one living whom she may term so, for it is the custom among us to call any elderly kinsman *tio*—which means 'uncle', you know. But he is only her mother's cousin-german."

"Are you acquainted?"

"He is one of my best friends and one of the greatest enemies of your nation. He would never be comforted after seeing the great property escape him which he would have employed to defend his country."

"Is he here?"

"No. If I knew where he was, I should not tell you, but I am totally ignorant. I dare say that he is busy somewhere up in the mountains organizing a *guerilla* of which your army will hear something."

"What might his name be?" bluffly demanded the American in his colonial frankness.

"Do not be displeased, senior officer, if I keep silent," replied Don Inigo. "What would you think of me if I were to put you on the track of a brave leader who will do you all the mischief he can and under whose orders I should be proud to serve, were I younger. Let us return to Senorita de Gavre, if you please. Your replies teach me that you saw her at the Empress Josephine's court and that she is not yet wed. I dare say she will marry some Frenchman?"

Paul had a strong inclination to proclaim that the lady was intended for him, but he confined himself to responding:

"I should not wonder, and I wish her no worse fate."

"May heaven forgive her for failing to follow the noble examples of her race!" sighed the marquis.

Fontenay was going to object to this over-zealous patriot that the lady had French blood also in her veins, when Tournesol entered and said:

"At what o'clock do we make a start in the morning, lieutenant?"

"A couple of hours before dawn. It is a long 'route' and we shall not get in before dark."

"I understand, lieutenant. The horses will be ready. Your bed is made in the store-house, next the stables."

I forced the old cat to light me a lantern to let us see where we are till daylight. It is the safest plan; in this devil's own country it is no good sleeping without a candle burning."

Tournesol disappeared after making the military salute. Don Inigo had not opened his mouth. He very clearly comprehended French, even with Tournesol's Gascon accent, but he would not speak it, from national pride. As soon as the soldier had withdrawn, he resumed in Spanish as before.

"Senor, I have not concealed my sentiments from you, but I beg to think that you do not suspect me of wishing to profit by your sleep to cut your throat, as that soldier seems to believe. I am a nobleman, and a noble does not commit murder. You may depart when you like and you will arrive without mishap at your Emperor's head-quarters. In a day or so, you will attack the valiant defenders of Spain; if you escape the disaster awaiting you at Somo Sierra—when you are fleeing before my victorious countrymen—then come and crave a shelter! I will not refuse it to you."

This was genuine Spanish bravado, and the creole smiled on hearing this vanquished noble speak of clemency when the French army was marching upon his capital without meeting serious resistance. The insurgents—as the Emperor Napoleon styled the Spanish in his proclamations—commanded by a young and hot-headed general, had been hurled back at Burgos by Lassalle's light cavalry, and no reason existed to believe that the time was near when a heavier force would be necessary to overpower them. But still there was grandeur in the marquis' arrogant speech, and the lieutenant bowed to the man whose patriotism excused his boastfulness.

He did not expect to extract any further information in regard to the Spanish heiress. He politely took leave of him and went to the stables to rejoin Tournesol, who was snoring when he entered.

The amorous American had some trouble to court slumber, though becoming accustomed to sleep in straw since he had crossed the Bidassao River. The shreds and patches of history related by Don Inigo ran through his head. He thought of the legendary lovers of Teruel,

illustrious in Spain and unknown elsewhere. He did not doubt that their descendant had inherited their virtues with the treasures of her forefathers, and he yearned to reconquer for her the disappeared fortune of which the *Tio* had appropriated the securities in the casket of Mlle. de Gavre, stolen at Malmaison.

Don Inigo had not been willing to tell the name of this fanatic and unscrupulous relative, but it would be known in Teruel.

Unfortunately for Paul, a new-comer into Aragon, he did not know precisely where that town, was and if he had known it, he was not in a position to divine whether the hazards of the campaign would lead him thither or not.

He dreamed that Napoleon commanded him to take a battery of the enemy's, and, taking it with its guns, he forced the "uncle" who defended it to yield up his secret. This dream, however prophetic, did not prevent him enjoying a sleep which lasted until peep of day.

However fiercely a youth of twenty may love, nature never loses her rights.

Fontenay was aroused by Tournesol, who always slept with one eye open, and who had already saddled the horses which had reposed after being groomed.

Before sunrise the officer and his orderly were on the way.

Neither the marquis nor his housekeeper had appeared.

CHAPTER V.

THE POLISH LANCER.

It was a long stage, eighteen Spanish leagues, full measure, over a wild and arid country in cold and foggy weather; but at the end was a battle-field, and Fontenay would have trudged on foot rather than miss it.

The less enthusiastic Tournesol had not lost any of his high spirits. He sang all sorts of songs—of the sea, of the camp and in dialect—and every time he was spoken to replied with a jest.

About noon they halted in a miserable hamlet, Rocaguillas, where they found nothing to eat except one *tortilla*, an omelette fried in rancid oil, and nothing to drink except black wine tasting of goatskin, but it unloosed Paul's tongue.

He questioned Tournesol on his campaigns with the Thirteenth Cuirassiers, and the old trooper did not require pressing to draw the portraits of his superiors. In the first place, Colonel Daigremont, who never charged without humming a jocular song which his men repeated in chorus; and the Gascon came by gradation to speak of Commandant Carénac whom Fontenay had partially forgotten since the incident in Malmaison Park.

Tournesol loudly trumpeted this leader, risen from the ranks, and lauded his exploits. At Eylau, in the preceding year, Carénac, then a captain, had with one saber stroke cleft to the chin the head of a handsome Russian colonel of the *Chevaliers Gardes*. Carénac had fought a score of duels and had never missed killing or grievously wounding his adversary.

Our good Tournesol did not suspect that his lieutenant, of such fresh creation, had come to blows with this

ex-fencing-master, and that they were likely to meet again, as both were serving in Spain.

Fontenay let him prate away. Finally he asked him what effect was produced in him when he went under fire.

"Why, lieutenant," simply answered Tournesol, "when one hears the *bulldogs* growl, it takes one up short, and when the grape-shot hurtles over, one ducks his head; but up it is held again as soon as the colonel shouts: 'Heads up, cuirassiers! that's only dust!' We charge and when we dash among the enemy, we chop away like deaf coppersmiths hammering! It is only at the first slash that there's any 'waving'; after that, the work goes on of itself."

"That is the idea I formed of battle," muttered the creole.

"And, mark you, lieutenant, when the Emperor is on the ground it puts heart into you. One would hack his way through ten squares of infantry without stopping to take breath. The Emperor will be there to-morrow if it gets hot work, and I have a suspicion it will warm up. Everytime that it is to be hammer-and-tongs, I have twinges in my left thigh, in the place where I was lanced by a Uhlan in the battle of Jena in 1806."

This prognostic was no more to be relied upon than Calchas' oracles, and besides, having been wounded only in the cheek, Fontenay could not consult any such *warometer*.

"I hope there will be fighting," he remarked. "That Spanish peer, dressed like Figaro, prophesied last evening that we would be crushed at Somo Sierra. It appears to be a formidable position, planted with cannon."

"Pooh! the Emperor will make but one bite of it. He has carried many others defended by better soldiers than these ragged rioters. It will be the work for one charge of horse!"

"I do so hope I may have a part in it!" sighed the West Indian. "I do not yet belong to any regiment, and I suppose that the imperial staff-officers never quit his person."

"Just the other way—I imagine that he will want to

test you and will send you under fire to see how you bear yourself."

"That is all I wish! The idea warms me up—for it is so cold! This wind that blows upon our faces is icy—"

"It came over the mountains, where those beggars await us. They must shiver there and no joke," said Tournesol to console himself.

Since they left Roceguillas, the country changed in aspect. They had arrived on the foremost foot-hills of the Sierra, and the scarcely perceptible road began the rough ascent of that wild Cordillera, which rises like a stone wall between the two Castiles.

Nobody showed himself upon the rocks bordering the sides unless it were some goat-herds afar, and a few peasants who darted hateful glances at them as they passed by. They did not answer when Fontenay questioned them in Spanish, and Tournesol would have willingly flogged them with his sword to teach them politeness.

"Upon my word, lieutenant," he gayly said, "your power to speak the gibberish of these scowling ruffians gains you no great things! You may be very lucky to know it, but if I were you I should pretend not to know a word of it."

"Why so?" inquired Paul, much astonished.

"Because in that case they would not fight shy about jabbering away before you, and you would learn lots of things. Suppose, for instance, that we stopped for a night's rest at one of their filthy taverns—what they call a *venta* I suppose, because there is no *venta*-lation, ha, ha! and the blackguards sure to be there, should plot to cut our throats while we sleep—they would not be careful about plain talk; we should be warned and might be forearmed."

"You have a good idea there," approved the American, struck by the soundness of the reasoning. "I will bear it in mind."

The chances were that the occasion for utilizing this wise suggestion would not keep them waiting in a region prolific with ambushes.

The dialogue ceased there. They had marched since morning with only one hour's rest, and the horses were as wearied as their riders. They descried a miserable

hamlet ahead, near a small rivulet at the mouth of a gloomy gorge.

"We shall never reach the Emperor's head-quarters this evening," observed the creole. "Let us pull up there and camp till daylight. We shall find somebody to speak to as I see smoke from the chimney."

"Some of our stragglers who have lit a fire, lieutenant. The natives warm themselves with charcoal in a saucepan."

"Yes, in *braseros*—braziers—we shall be all the better for the innovation—so let us gallop to arrive sooner."

He was about to drive in both spurs when a short whistling sound passed close to his ear; a detonation followed, repeated by the mountain echoes.

"They fired on us," remarked Tournesol, rising in his stirrups to look.

He saw nothing but a boy perched on a boulder a hundred paces from the road—a boy in tatters, who had not the strength to handle a musket.

"I heard the bullet whiz past," said Fontenay; "the music was new to me."

"You will get used to it, lieutenant. If I lay hold of the brigand who tried to murder you—"

"On horseback you would never catch him in the rocks where he is hiding. Forward! at full speed! I do not want to give him time to try again!"

The two forced their steeds into the charging gallop which carried them with slackened bridle into the village; as Tournesol had conjectured, it was filled with French soldiers of all branches of the services. Many were clustered round a flaming pile of wood built up out of the doors and window-frames wrenched from the houses. Some were stewing in kettles joints of a goat killed with the bayonet. Others were already asleep, stretched on the bare ground. Not one moved to make room for the officer.

The picture was saddening, and Fontenay—who dreamt of battle in the sunshine with cannon thundering and trumpets blaring—saw war at the outset under its gloomiest aspect. It was the seamy side of glory.

All these wretched men were cripples left behind on the road, who had dragged themselves here "for a warm,"

or marauders who had run away from their regiments to seek provisions in the country, with very little to find.

"Is this an army?" the young officer questioned himself.

But he remembered that close to this bivouac of famished prowlers, the Emperor was at the head of those valorous soldiers who had conquered the half of Europe; he would see him in another day and would arrive in the very time to take part in a certain victory.

He alighted. Tournesol unbridled the horses without unsaddling, for his officer intended starting again before nightfall, and he gave them some barley which he had supplied himself with before quitting Don Inigo's mansion.

A soldier, better disciplined than the others, rose to allow the new-comer to approach the fire. He wore the uniform of the Polish lancers called into Spain by Napoleon with the Vistula Legion, two fine foot regiments, all chafing to march on the enemy. His nationality could be told by his long flaxen mustache; he spoke French fairly well.

"Lieutenant," said he, lifting his hand to his *schapska* "would you like me to drive all these feather-bed soldiers away with the flat of my saber?"

"Thank you, my brave fellow," responded Fontenay, "when I feel like sitting by the fire, I shall make them stand aside. How the mischief do you come to be among such a crew?"

"My horse broke his leg as we left Ceréso, the village behind us, and all I could do was to get as far as this. Here I am dismounted and I never will be able to join my troop, which is on service beside the Emperor, before the general action."

"So you believe there will be fighting to-morrow?"

"That is a sure thing. The road is blocked by intrenchments supplied with artillery. It is rush through or draw back, and Napoleon never recedes! This position of Somo Sierra is the Thermopylæ of Spain."

The American had not in the least expected to hear a Polish soldier evoke this classical allusion, and the other, who read his amazement on his face, pursued by way of elucidation:

"I was a student in Wilna University when called to serve your Emperor, who, I earnestly hope, will liberate Poland. I am ready to die for him and I should never comfort myself for losing so fine an occasion to charge under his eyes. Oh, lieutenant, if I only had a horse!"

"I am sorry that I have no spare one."

But Fontenay perceived that the Polander eyed the other, Tournesol's, with desire, and he inquired:

"Are we still far from Somo Sierra?"

"A league at most—three quarters of an hour's walk."

"Well, if you are fit for the walk my orderly can turn his horse over to you for the charge. You and I will ride upon the enemy, knee to knee."

"Oh, if you would do so much for me—"

"I will try. It may not be possible. I have a letter to be given to the Emperor and I do not know but he may retain me by him. But come all the same. It shall not be said that I left a brave gentleman in difficulties, if I could help him out."

"Thank you, lieutenant; I would give my life for you, whenever you want it."

"That is too much," said the West Indian, laughing. "Now I can lie down without supper—fatigue has spoilt my appetite."

"Then allow me to make your bed," merrily replied the Polander.

Spurning the sleepers extended in rows before the fire, he cleared a space for the officer who laid himself down on the hard ground without other covering than his cloak. The evicted tenants growled like kicked dogs, but the lancer held them in respect and they rolled over to fall asleep again a little farther off.

Tournesol had watched the colloquy between the soldier and his officer out of the tail of his eye, but he did not leave his horses, and the Pole did not like to go up to him to speak of his superior's intentions. On the next day would be time enough to remind Fontenay of his promise, conditional but positive, to lend him his follower's horse.

An hour afterward all were more or less soundly sleeping without dreaming of the danger of surprise. Ten determined Spaniards might have made mince-meat

of this rabble of men demoralized and almost all weaponless, but the Spaniards were on the crest of Somo Sierra, and the night passed without any alarm.

The sky was slightly whitening in the east when the wide-awake Tournesol came to shake his officer out of a profound slumber.

Five minutes more and they were in the saddle. The Pole did not show himself, and Fontenay thought he had changed his mind. He was wrong, for the brave fellow was waiting for him at the outlet from the village, with his sword by his side and his lance on his shoulder, not having cast that aside by his crippled horse.

"Can you keep up with us?" inquired Paul.

"Certainly I can, lieutenant. In the highlands, a man on foot can travel faster than a horseman," answered the dismounted cavalrist with assurance.

Tournesol did not venture to question his master about the new comrade, who preceded them at a rapid pace.

Silently and painfully they advanced, for the way was dreadfully bad. It rose in zigzags through a narrow gorge, between perpendicular rocks, and it was strewn with large stones against which the horses stumbled at every instant. Thus riding for an hour, they heard heavy guns boom with such violence that a storm seemed to be bursting in the mountains.

"The dancing has begun," observed Tournesol, and it is the Spaniards who open the ball with their large siege-guns. I know them by the tune. Our people will try to silence them."

"My only hope is that we shall arrive before the end," grumbled Fontenay, spurring his steed without succeeding in making him trot on the stony escarpment of the detestable road.

"Fear nothing, lieutenant. There will be plenty of steel and lead for everybody. Behind cover, those fellows stick like leeches."

"They could not stand any length of time before the Imperial Guards, and they are there."

"Hark! our cannon begin to bark. Field pieces against theirs of heavy caliber! It is time that the infantry 'rushed' their batteries with the bayonet."

This could not be happening yet, as the rattling of musketry was added to the bellow of the artillery.

"Good! the attack is plain," commented Tournesol, "our columns are climbing up and they are receiving the pepper on the high land. But small shot will not check them, I'll be bound."

The Pole did not unlock his teeth but his eyes sparkled and he took strides an ell long.

The road grew steeper and was frequently cut by the dry bed of a torrent. The horses scrambled on amid incredible hindrances.

"It seems like quieting down," muttered Tournesol, who was an experienced judge.

Indeed, the fusillade was less sharp and the cannon boomed only at intervals.

"That's a token that the position was taken," said the soldier.

"Unless we were repulsed," murmured Fontenay.

He had divined correctly, for soldiers appeared, running pell-mell down the declivity. Some threw away their guns. It strongly resembled a rout.

The Polander stopped one of the fugitives in his flight to interrogate him but drew only incoherent replies, such as: "All is lost! the chasseurs of the Imperial Guard were swept back! The Emperor has been wounded!"

"It is clear that we arrive in the very nick!" ejaculated Marguerite's betrothed, drawing his sword—a little too soon, as the enemy were not in sight.

But, though invisible, they were not distant, as the clash of steel and the neighing of horses were now to be heard. Side hills masked the battle-field, very limited in compass unless the ravine suddenly enlarged beyond the final obstacles.

The ridge had to be surmounted to view it and the two horsemen no more than the lancer spared themselves in doing so. But they did not make progress in proportion to their desire, as the ascent was steep and the runaway soldiers began to impede the passage.

The Pole came up to Fontenay to say:

"Lieutenant, you know what you promised?"

"I am not going to break my word," bluntly replied

the West Indian; but if we have been beaten—and it looks to me so—you may find plenty of masterless horses; and if a rout, I cannot dismount my orderly, for the Spaniards will take him and hew him to pieces."

The ex-student of Wilna had to be contented with this reply, but he would not give up the game. Perhaps he purposed fighting on foot, using his spear as the Swiss did in defending their independence at Sempach and Morat. He arrived simultaneously with the French at the last turn in the rugged way. When they had passed the corner of a rock rising on their right, they suddenly had a sight under their eyes never to be forgotten.

"At last!" exclaimed Paul Fontenay, "I am going to be in a battle!"

CHAPTER VI.

HIS FIRST BATTLE.

Beyond the rock yawned a vast gorge, towered over at the bottom by snowy escarpments; entrenchments covered them and were armed with over forty pieces of cannon and protected at the base by two ravines; bridges over the last had been destroyed. Flocks of Spanish sharp-shooters flanked the batteries and compact masses of infantry crowned the heights.

Nearer at hand the Emperor Napoleon and his staff were sheltered by an enormous boulder half blocking up the way.

Still nearer the Imperial Guard chasseurs, repulsed with heavy losses, were trying to reform to attempt a second charge.

A little to the rear of the Emperor two foot regiments were waiting.

Over all this scene of grandeur reigned a death-like silence. No shots, no outcries, nothing but a confused hubbub, an audible shudder, which might be taken for the repressed breathing of the thousands of men piled up in this natural circus, shut in on three sides by inaccessible mountains.

It was now or never that the Empress' messenger was bound to pierce as far as the Emperor. The impetuous American did not hesitate for a second. Without troubling about the Pole he incited his horse and rode straight at the imperial group. Tournesol followed at the gallop, but he was not so well mounted and he was soon distanced by his leader whom the escort pickets moved to intercept. But he passed them, shouting loudly enough to split their ears:

"Way! make way! a courier for the Emperor! I bear a message to his Majesty!"

He was not lying, as he had under his coat the Empress Josephine's letter; but it was an ill-selected moment to hand it to Napoleon and this was not his intention. He aimed to be within scope of the cavalry charging, and he succeeded in this point, as he was soon mingled with the cavalry drawn up for action, and capitally placed to see what the Emperor did. The latter would not care to deal with him at this juncture, as he was violently upbraiding a cavalry colonel, who returned from the attack, declaring loudly that the position was impregnable. Fontenay heard Napoleon irritatedly exclaim with a wrathful gesture: "What! are Spanish peasants to hold my guards in check?" while Colonel de Piré, a hero, if ever there were one, repeated without emotion: "Sire, it is impregnable." Another superior officer, Philippe de Ségur retorted to him: "But the Emperor believes the contrary!" whereupon the colonel answered bluffly: "Come with me and see for yourself!"

This scene is recorded in history which our lieutenant at twenty had the fortune to witness as a reward for crossing the Atlantic.

The colonel of the Polish lancers of the escort was fretting for the order to charge.

"Commandant," called out Ségur to him, "the Emperor wishes an end to be put to this. We have the honor! Fall in by files! Forward—charge!"

With his saber drawn he rode to range himself beside the colonel at the head of the regiment, which hurled itself onward like an avalanche.

Napoleon saluted the brave men as they flew by unto an almost certain death, but as though to a feast. He did not notice Paul Fontenay, who was galloping alone on the flank of the column, full of joy at having attained his goal.

Before dashing off he had been afraid of being frightened; now, intoxicated by the rapidity of the charge and inflamed by the ambition to distinguish himself under the great Napoleon's eyes, he was no longer disquieted by the danger and felt capable of riding on thus into Madrid. Nevertheless, forty thousand gunshots and

forty canisters of grape-shot were ready to receive him every minute.

He learned something of this as soon as he passed the rock protecting the Emperor from the projectiles.

The fortified slope blazed up like a volcano. Nothing was visible but clouds of white smoke, furrowed by flashes of lightning, and nothing was audible but the thunder of the cannonade.

Three batteries, one above the other, belched destruction; twelve thousand Spaniards, massed upon the table-land, fired at easy range so accurately on the storming party that disorder soon appeared among them. Men and horses fell under this hail of lead and iron slugs; but the heroic regiment reformed at the voice of its colonel and renewed the charge after closing up the decimated ranks.

Fontenay was astonished at being still alive, but he urged his horse to bound over the corpses. He was not a hundred paces from the first trench when the boot of a horseman jostled his leg and he heard a voice close to him say at the same instant:

"Here we are, lieutenant!"

It was the Pole who overtook him, mounted on Tournesol's horse. Had he taken it by force or had the soldier consented to yield it up? It will readily be believed that Paul did not seek to learn, but the intrepid lancer's presence exalted his courage and he thought of nothing except arriving before him at the battery of which the fire doubled in intensity. One shot did not wait for the next, and each volley mowed down whole files.

In five minutes more the regiment would have disappeared.

But the closer the assaulters drew, the more uncertain became the Spaniards' almost perpendicular fire, and the former had only a short slope to cross to reach the intrenchments. The gunners defending them began to lose their coolness, and the upper batteries could not fire without risk of dropping shot upon them. In the embrasures showed red-capped heads and naked arms brandishing pikes, which would not preserve them from the longer Polish lances.

A little on the left hand Paul took notice of one of

these port-holes apparently larger than the others, and he said to himself:

"That's the one I mean to enter by."

The Pole seemed to make the same choice as himself, and to be the foremost he ploughed up his horse's sides with the rowels. Fontenay used his own with fury in his resolution not to be surpassed.

Suddenly a man rose upon the epaulment, an earthen sidework; he was tall and he held a *trabuco*, or blunderbuss, the favorite fire-arm of the lower orders of Spanish; its wide barrel held about a pound of bullets.

The wind had driven away the smoke and the outline of this bold defender was sharply defined on the snow-covered scarp. He would have no time to reload, but he doubtless expected to exterminate several lancers before abandoning his post. But he seemed before firing to want to choose among those he sought to destroy, for he did not hasten to lift his brass blunderbuss to his shoulder.

Fontenay was forming prayers for the choice not to be in his favor, when on rising to collect his horse's powers for a leap in at the not very high embrasure, he recognized the daring gunner. It was the thief in the thicket of Malmaison, who shot him squarely in the face and eluded him. This time he was not going to inflict a flesh wound. Paul felt he was doomed. With only a sword he could not parry the terrible discharge which he would receive point-blank. It appeared to him as though the Spaniard recognized him also, for he quickly brought his gun to his shoulder and took aim at him. He closed his eyes instinctively, while the Pole threw himself with his horse toward the shot, which went off at that same moment; he was hurled back upon Paul and both were thrown out of the saddle. The American was not killed, but he remained lying at the foot of the parapet under the body of the generous soldier who had sacrificed himself to save him. He had hard work to disengage himself, and when he succeeded he saw none but the dead around him.

The battery had been taken and the Poles were pursuing the Spaniards who fled toward the crests.

The lieutenant ran his hands over himself and perceived

that one slug had gone through the flesh of the left arm; the blood flowed upon his coat, as it had on his face at Malmaison; but this time he was wounded fighting for his mother country.

"So this is a battle," he thought, astonished to be on his feet again. "It seems to be nothing to brag about, but I may see more and they may not resemble this."

He recollected the unfortunate lancer who stiffened at his feet, riddled with bullets, having received the blunderbuss load so nearly that his uniform smoldered. He was slain outright, and Fontenay, who owed his life to this obscure hero, could not refrain from musing on the singularities of destiny. This man had been brought from the depths of Poland to be killed in the heart of Spain, while saving a native of the West Indies, met by chance beside a bivouac fire!

But sentimental pondering was unseasonable, and the American could not forget that he bore a letter from the Empress. It had almost failed reaching its address from going under fire; and it was high time for it to be handed to the Emperor. The hour was propitious at the heels of a victory, in which Fontenay had taken a little share.

The horses had not been hit. Paul mounted his, took the other's reins and walked them down the slope, up which he had galloped under the grape-shot.

He was not long spying Jean Tournesol, running toward him with uplifted arms as quickly as the roughness of the ground allowed.

"Hurrah, lieutenant!" shouted the soldier. "I never believed I should see you again. Alive, eh? and not badly damaged since you are in the saddle. Wounded—in the flesh of the arm? oh, that's nothing! But I will guide you to the ambulance."

"Not now," interrupted Fontenay. "Where is the Emperor?"

"Yonder, on the highway. You can see him from here."

Indeed, the Emperor was in sight, surrounded by a staff of general officers. At the time of the charge, which would decide the day, he had stepped from behind the sheltering rock. On such occasions "his greatness

did not keep him on the shore," as Louis XIV. held himself during the crossing of the Rhine by the royal troops; the warrior wished to see with his own eye and he had watched all the incidents of the action.

"Our horses are not disabled," remarked Tournesol; "that's a great piece of luck; but it is not my fault that mine went into the *ball-room*. Just imagine, lieutenant, when I got off my horse and was holding it that mad Pole banged up against me and jumped into the saddle without using the stirrup. The cunning rogue had followed us on foot from the turn of the road. And away he dashed like a bullet from a gun behind his own charging regiment. There was nothing to be seen but the fire. Where the mischief has he gone?"

"He remains yonder," answered Paul. "He was slain instanter by a blunderbuss discharge, which would have 'made hash' of me if he had not thrown himself before me."

"The brave man! Well, there's some good in these Polish lancers, after all!"

This funeral oration was a little meager, but Tournesol was not skillful in turning sentences, although glib of speech, and Fontenay was too deeply touched to add any ornaments to it. There is no time in war to weep over the fallen.

The fighting was over. The three higher batteries, though more advantageously placed than the lowermost, were given up by their defenders, terrified by the success of the Polish lancers. The French infantry, sustaining them, ran up into them without meeting a musket shot. The Spaniards were flying in disorder upon the reverse side of the Sierra. The road to Madrid was clear, and after doubting his fortune for a space, Napoleon was victorious once more.

The sub-lieutenant began to suffer from the wound received in his "baptism by fire," and had lost much blood.

"Bandage my arm with the handkerchief which you will find in my pocket," he said to Tournesol, as he alighted at the foot of the slope. "Now," he added, when this was done, "unbutton my cape; rip up the lining and take out a letter which should be sewn up between it and the cloth."

"I have it, lieutenant."

"Right! Guard the horses and wait for me here on the road."

"But, lieutenant, are you not going to have your wound dressed?"

"I have plenty of time. Do as you are told."

Tournesol made no reply, and his officer proceeded toward the imperial party, with that letter in his hand, which ought to serve as passport to the Emperor. He no longer regretted having failed to deliver it before the combat, in which he had, he believed, distinguished himself—and he hoped to be the better welcomed from presenting himself covered with marks of his bravery. The letter was in a large envelope, sealed with the arms of the empire with red wax, and he held it over his head like a talisman that would open a passage.

Upon the magical phrase: "A dispatch for the Emperor!" with which the young officer supported the display, the sentinels stood aside and he was enabled to walk alone toward Napoleon. Sitting on his horse he was waiting for the return of his aids-de-camp sent off in all directions to bring him news of the conflict.

Fontenay had never seen the glorious Sovereign but in the Tuileries drawing-room or at a distance reviewing his guards in the Carrousel court-yard. The monarch had never addressed a word to him.

The young officer felt very small as he went up to the crowned general, who, though he had begun his career like him, now dictated laws to Europe. Still he had some of the self-confidence inspiring the sons of his fervid country, and, without being too greatly abashed, he bore the luster of that gaze which seemed to read in the very profundities of the soul.

"Who are you? What do you want?" brusquely demanded the Emperor.

"Sire, I bring to your majesty a letter from the Empress."

"Do you come from Paris?"

"And from la Malmaison, sire, where I learned from the Empress direct that your majesty deigned to attach me to the imperial person, and to grant me the officer's epaulet."

"Your name is Paul Fontenay? You were born in America?"

"Yes, sire; in Martinique."

"When did you join the army?"

"An hour ago, sire?"

"Why did you not present yourself immediately to me?"

"Sire, the polish lancers of the Guard were charging the enemy at the moment when I came up—and—and I charged with them."

"Without having the order?"

"Sire, I was impatient to merit the favor your majesty showed me in naming me a sub-lieutenant."

"You merited being put under arrest, monsieur, for not having waited for my command. Your place was behind me, since you formed part of my staff."

Fontenay had not expected treatment of this sort. He wished he could sink into the earth and he did not venture to justify himself.

Napoleon took the letter held out to him, opened it, read it at a glance, and said to him in a less stern tone:

"The Empress writes to me that you know Spanish?"

"Yes, sire; I understand it and I speak it fluently."

"That is well. You may be useful to me—when you are wiser," added the Emperor, half smiling.

His glance had become milder, and Paul was commencing to recover from the agitation into which the master's early words had thrown him when he was suddenly asked:

"Are you wounded?"

"It is nothing, sire—a scratch which will not prevent me serving—"

"Begin by getting healed. Go to the ambulance—and try to be so restored as to follow me to-morrow. In three days I shall be in Madrid where you can complete your convalescence. I may need you."

A curt gesture dismissed Fontenay. The colloquy had not lasted three minutes, but, among the officers who watched it from a distance, more than one envied the fortune of this beardless soldier to whom the Emperor had listened as he did not always listen to his generals. Fontenay walked away, intoxicated with gladness, to

rejoin Tournesol, who had kept on the road, and to be led by him straight to the tents pitched near there in a ravine sheltered from the Spanish bullets.

A dreadful spectacle awaited him there. The surgeons were amputating the leg at the thigh of a quartermaster of the chasseurs of the guards—a handsome blade not much older than the creole. A surgeon major came up to receive the sub-lieutenant, examined the arm perforated by one of the bullets of the terrible blunderbuss and lightly said:

"You have merely a seton there, officer of mine! no fracture—the radial artery has not been touched, though it was a close squeak—and you have narrowly escaped. We'll put lint on it and there won't be a show for it in a couple of days. We call this a sham-battle wound!"

"Heaven hear you, major!" exclaimed the novice, who feared nothing so much as being left in the rear, since he had entered definitely among the Emperor's campaign household.

He placed himself under the hands of the hospital attendants who dressed the hurt after a fashion, for the army medical service was very deficient, particularly in Spain where every requisite was lacking.

There was nothing more for him to do than to seek a shelter until the morning, without inquiring about his new comrades of the staff, with whom he had not made any acquaintance.

The ingenious Tournesol provided for the night. He contrived to find an old *cantinière* who had gone through the Polish campaign of 1807 with the 13th Cuirassiers, she owned a "caravan" or "living wagon," a cart covered with a canvas tilt, wherein Fontenay could rest and eat in default of a better lodging. Tournesol made a "shake-down" of straw underneath the vehicle and the horses did not go fasting, thanks to his cares.

Undoubtedly the Gascon was a fellow of infinite resources, and his superior had the idea of sending him to find the body of the heroic lancer, fallen at the foot of the first intrenchment.

Not without difficulty he discovered it among the other corpses and wisely thought to bring to his officer some papers and a portrait found on the not yet stripped

body. This Pole, who had fallen the victim to his bravery, was named Ladislaus Zolnycki; he was a Lithuanian, and the portrait, of a young fair girl, no doubt was of his betrothed.

Fontenay locked up these relics in his portemanteau, saying to himself that if the fortune of war took him into Poland at some period to come, he might give them to the parents of the brave soldier who had saved his life.

As he looked at the portrait, his mind called up the sweet image of Marguerite de Gavre, a little forgotten in the midst of his adventures. She appeared to him, as seen at Malmaison on the eve of his departure, pale, trembling and hardly repressing her tears. Was she consoled already? Did she still love him? Would he ever behold her again? these were all questions which he put to himself without power to solve them.

And would he meet that ruffian again who had robbed her and nearly killed him a second time on his road in this insurgent realm where no French officer was sure to live four-and-twenty hours?

Paul ardently yearned to meet one of whom he hoped to clear the world, without caring what might become of himself in this third encounter.

But the future is in no man's grasp—it is in the hand of heaven!

CHAPTER VII.

A LESSON IN INTERPRETATION.

The ambulance surgeon's prognostic was verified. On the morrow of the glorious charge of Somo Sierra our colonial friend was able to follow the Emperor on horseback with the suite into Bintrago, a frightful petty town where the staff-officers had much difficulty in finding accommodation. The Spanish were fleeing on all sides and closely pursued with the sword. The French defeat at Baylen was revenged.

On the third day, Napoleon arrived before Madrid. The cannon and the muskets blazed and the church bells rang the general alarm. It seemed as if all the people of the capital meant to perish in the breach to save it from invasion. This patriotic enthusiasm speedily calmed. Twenty-four hours subsequently, the Emperor established his head-quarters in Chamartin, close to the Alcala gate; and from the palace of the dukes of the Infantado he issued the famous decrees abolishing the council of Castile and suppressing the inquisition.

At any instant the capitulation was looked for, and Lieutenant Fontenay already wondered if the campaign were not finished so that he should never again see powder burnt. He had acquired a taste for it. He little foresaw that the war in Spain had only commenced.

For the present, nothing was craved for his happiness had Chamartin been less remote from Malmaison.

During the three days journey, he had formed mess-friendships with the other officers of the order-carrying department, all young and nearly all amiable. They already appreciated his quick and impulsive spirit, his hearty frankness, and particularly his good humor, for melancholy was not fostered by this staff, as may

be surmised. These gentlemen lived in Paris between the campaigns, where they mingled in all the upper classes of society; they more often discussed the fashionable beauty than problems of strategy or foreign politics.

Fontenay, though coming from too far not to want experience on these heads, played his part very well in this concert of boon companions who were also valiant knights.

They had the right to amuse themselves a little, as not one was unprepared to leave a banquet to "sup with Pluto," upon an order from the Emperor.

They soon treated the American as an old comrade and he felt proud to be numbered among them, although only once having seen the enemy, and reckoning among his claims under service only one poor little unimportant wound.

He had never been so happy, although he had not received any news from Marguerite de Gavre, and he saw everything in a rosy tint.

This was the same with Jean Tournesol, who blessed his present fate and had faith in the future. He had obtained a regular transfer from the Thirteenth Cuirassiers, destined to carry on the war in Aragon, into the fixed service as orderly to Lieutenant Fontenay.

Chamartin seemed to him the best of garrisons. He was warmly housed and richly fed. The inhabitants were not too fierce, and as he had nothing much to do, he employed his leisure in learning Spanish, in which he poorly succeeded or he mixed with it so many words of his dialect that the grave Castilians who heard him believed he was making a jest of them.

It was really too much felicity, and could not endure.

The second day of the stay at Chamartin was marked by a grand event. In the morning news came that the Junta of Madrid would present themselves at midday to make submission to the Emperor and surrender the keys of the city for his disposal.

None of the staff were astonished by this prompt capitulation. All these young officers were accustomed to vanquish swiftly, and Fontenay was naturally fond of the same mode and had absolute faith in Napoleon's genius.

He did not expect to figure in the ceremony, but was not sorry to see the procession of discomfited alcaides pass, and he was buckling on his sword belt before going to await them at the palace doors when a guard's non-commissioned officer came to say his majesty had summoned him. This order much surprised him and made him a trifle uneasy, for he was not on duty that day. What could the Emperor want of him? he could not conjecture, but he was compelled to obey and he lost not a minute in repairing to the head-quarters.

He found the Emperor in the court-yard, surrounded by a circle of sentries and walking solitarily, with his arms folded. His countenance betokened a storm, and this somber air did not at all encourage the sub-lieutenant, who nearly lost his self-governance when Napoleon bluntly said:

"You stated to me at Somo Sierra that you knew Spanish?"

"It is true, sire. I do know it."

"Do you know it well enough to translate off-hand the speech I am going to make to these people, and repeat it to them in their own tongue?"

"Yes, sire."

"I warn you that I shall perceive if your translation is not strictly correct, for I know Italian, and the two languages resemble each other."

"Sire, I shall translate word for word."

"That will do. Remain. I apply to you because you are the only officer on my staff capable of acting as interpreter. It is shameful! After the war, I will order the grand-master of the University to open courses of the living tongues in all the lyceums."

Fontenay did not breathe a word as he stood ready to fulfill his task while saying to himself that he had come into Spain to fight and not translate discourses.

The Emperor resumed his agitated promenade, but the Junta did not keep him waiting. They numbered a dozen, clad in the Spanish fashion at the commencement of this century. They resembled portraits by Goya which had stepped down from their frames. Their attitude was humble, although hatred shone in their eyes. Perhaps the burghers of Calais, headed by Eustache de

Saint-Pierre, presented a better face before King Edward III. of England.

Napoleon did not let the chief of the delegation have any time to raise his voice.

"You acted properly in not wearying my patience," he sternly began. "If you had delayed but one more day, I should have burnt your city and left not one stone upon another."

The speaker making a pause, Fontenay faithfully translated this menacing exordium, and saw how the negotiators' visages still farther lengthened. They were not at the end of their humiliation, for the Emperor proceeded in a stinging voice, which rang like a bugle-call in action:

"You come to sue for mercy because you are vanquished and your gathered peasants have nowhere made a stand against my troops. In the month of May, my soldiers were stabbed in the streets of Madrid. You know what that has cost you. I have chastised you, and I will chastise you again if you dare to revolt, and this time the punishment will be such that Spain will exist no more! I will make Madrid the capital of a French county."

Fontenay continued to translate as the address ran on, without softening the terms of the adjuration. But Napoleon added:

"Now, mark this well, ye who, in bringing your submission, perhaps think to massacre the Frenchmen who have spared you—if you try again to preach revolt, I will—"

The expression which the vanquisher made use of to show his mind was so plain spoken, after the manner of an old soldier, that Fontenay felt bound to substitute an equivalent. He translated it into Spanish: "I will crop your ears."

"That is not what I said," sternly reproved Napoleon repeating the phrase.

Fontenay was compelled to pronounce it distinctly, whereupon the dictator proceeded:

"Now gentlemen of the Junta, you know my resolutions. I have nothing farther to say. You can retire."

The negotiators went out, quivering with shame and

repressed rage. The only witness of the scene was Fontenay, who had played a passive part, and several soldiers who understood nothing of it. Poor Fontenay wore a sorry look, for he expected to be smartly chided for having attempted to sweeten the threats of his sovereign.

"Why did you take the liberty of changing in translation the term I employed?" coldly demanded the Emperor. As the offender lowered his eyes without replying, he pursued: "No doubt you believed that I uttered it in a fit of anger. You are completely mistaken. Not for an instant did I cease to be master of myself; but I wished to frighten those gentry. I bear you no ill will however for this, and I shall again choose you for interpreter on the next occasion. But do not try to divine my intentions. I do not ask of my officers zeal, but obedience. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sire, and I will bear in mind."

"Go, monsieur! but return this evening to hear my orders. I may have a commission to give you."

The West Indian went out without reply. In an instant he had passed from complete disgrace to marked favor, and the globe seemed unworthy to bear him! A mission! it was all he longed for—though the most painful and perilous of all a general-in-chief can intrust to a sub-lieutenant.

He hastened to warn his orderly to be ready for any event. He was directing his steps to the house where he was lodged when, in the narrow street, he met a person whom he had not expected in the least to see in the historic village of Chamartin. This person, preceded by a corporal of the guards gendarmes, was the best of his friends—the auditor of the council of state whom he had left at Malmaison—George de Prégny.

How the two friends exclaimed with surprise at thus meeting unawares in a street of a Madrid suburb! but it was only the creole who had any grounds for amaze as the other knew that his young kinsman had been attached to the Emperor's staff, as soon as he arrived, and he calculated on finding him with it.

"You, here!" ejaculated Paul, after shaking hands as with a brother.

"Yes, indeed," lightly replied George. "The president of the council of state selected me to carry this portfolio to his majesty. I had not hoped that it would so soon come my turn and, between ourselves, it is a favor I owe to our kind Empress."

He pointed to a wallet stuffed out with documents, carried by a subaltern official who had it in charge.

"I must deliver it solely to the Emperor in person," he added; "but, as soon as that is done, I am entirely yours."

"I will wait for you at the palace gate."

"Good! accompany me as far." Bending toward his friend's ear, George whispered: "I also bring you news to interest you."

Paul understood and reddened with joy at the thought that Mlle. de Gavre was alluded to.

"How is the Emperor at present?" inquired the auditor.

"In wonderfully good health, but he is not exactly in a good temper. He has been haranguing the Junta of Madrid and charged me to translate his speech. Oh, my friend, what a man! if you only knew."

"You can tell me the tale later on. I am eager to see him and yet I am in fear! I hope he will not receive me badly! he hardly knows me—in short, I hope the audience will not be a long one."

"It will not. Here is the palace! I will mount guard before the gates until you come out."

The new arrival entered with his little party, and Paul paced up and down in the street to dull his impatience. After ten minutes standing as sentry, which appeared very long to him, he saw an officer of the day come forth, not the auditor. It was Captain Charles de Vergoncey, one of the lightest-hearted on the staff and no older than himself. He had taken a liking to the American.

"What good luck!" he said to him. "Prégny has arrived! he is in the Emperor's study, where he will not be long detained as his majesty has just received dispatches from Marshal Ney and shut himself in with the prince of Neufchatel to answer them. Prégny will tell us what Paris is doing, for our dear George is 'in the

current,' and for a month I have not known what is the programme at the opera!"

"Yes, he can tell you," observed Fontenay, not thinking of the opera singers.

"Of course! oh, here he is—the Emperor quickly unpacked his budget and packed him off!"

George came to them. He knew Vergoncey from having often met him in the Parisian drawing-rooms and play-houses, but he would gladly have dispensed with chatting with him instead of conversing with his bosom friend alone.

"Well," challenged the officer without prelude, "what is there new up there? Is there a new high soprano? are there any new plays? We are living here like savages. Speak a little to us about the queens of the stage—has Mlle. Duchesnois returned from Erfurt?"

"A month ago, benighted one! So have Mlle. Rancourt and Talma. At the opera the 'Vestale' of Signor Spontini is still playing. The other day, in the Feydeau Theatre, I saw 'Urgele the Fairy,' with a most brilliant performance at which the king of Westphalia was present. The Emperor's return is awaited to put on 'the Triumph of Trajan,' which had so much success last winter."

"I saw the first performance and remember it. 'The Triumph' was not only on the stage but in the theatre—for *Trajan* was Napoleon."

"At a small theatre they are giving us '*la Cranomanie*,' a vaudeville in which fun is poked at Doctor Gall who is said to tell fortunes by looking at one's skull! Am I to tell your father, my dear Vergoncey that General Suchet has married the daughter of Mayor d' Anthoine of Marseilles and niece of King Joseph I. of Spain—that the foundation stone has been laid on the Place de la Bastille of a monumental fountain to be in the shape of an elephant—that the Faubourg Saint Antoine brewers have offered their dray-horses to drag the Emperor's statue to its column in the Place Vendôme—that the Borghese *Achilles* and *Gladiator* have arrived in prime condition—that—whew! that is all. My budget is emptied!"

"Good! but the festivities? is the gavotte still the *furor*?"

"Festivities are few up to the present. The Empress will not reside in the Tuileries until the 12th of December. And the winter season will not be merry if the war continues. This one may end, but an imbroglio with Austria is talked about."

"Glad to hear it! I will not be sorry to go to Germany instead of having my skull beaten past your Doctor Gall's reading it, in this dog's kennel of a country. Oh, you auditors are happy! you can sit on the Feuillants Convent terrace and pass your afternoons quizzing the ladies!"

"When we are not pulled about over the roads in a rickety *calash* which breaks down on the way—as happened to me the day before yesterday. I am still lame from my fall and I am going—'pon my word—to take a rest at my friend Fontenay's. For a week I have not slept in a real bed. I hope to see you this evening, my dear captain."

"Probably! Sound sleep, my dear fellow!" said Vergoncey a little piqued at the polite leave-taking, and he strode off from our Orestes and Pylades.

"What a gossip!" muttered Prégny when the officer had turned his back.

"A rattle-brain—but he has good points. He is very brave—he wears his heart on his sleeve and he has most warmly welcomed me. But here we are by ourselves and I am not going to lose you since we have met. I have much to inquire about—"

"Not of the *prima donnas*, I hope," laughingly interrupted the auditor.

"Dear, no! in all the world there is only one woman! Let us go into my house and talk of her "

Fontenay was lodged near the head-quarters in a pretty house, deserted by the owner on the approach of the French. Into it he ushered his friend who began making himself at home by stretching himself on a divan. The host had Tournesol serve up a collation which George greatly needed and gave him time to recruit himself. When this was done, the enamored creole inquired without preamble:

"Did you see her before you started?"

"I had an hour's chat with her. I hope you are not jealous!"

"Not of you. What did she tell you?"

"A number of things—so many that I do not know which to begin with."

"Then she has not forgotten me."

"She thinks of you alone and speaks of none else, so that our good Empress banters her sometimes on this exclusion of other sentiments. But she is interested more than ever in her—ay, and in you! She expressly charged me to tell you that the marriage shall take place as soon as you are a captain and win the medal of honor."

"Heaven only knows when!" sighed the lieutenant.

"It strikes me you are on the right road. You have already been wounded under the Emperor's eyes, so the sub-officer told me this morning who commanded my escort of soldiers."

"Oh, a trifle of a wound. I was quits with carrying my left arm in a sling three days."

"Then you were not more seriously injured than by that ruffian in the wood of la Malmaison?"

"No, and what if I tell you that ruffian—"

"I am going to startle you by saying that we know who he is—"

"I also know, and you will never guess how I acquired the information."

"The Empress acquainted me, being kind enough to relate the story of your betrothed. This man came into France for nothing but to steal Mlle. de Gavre's deed-box. He succeeded, and has not been caught."

"I know something on this score. I met him again at Somo Sierra, defending a Spanish battery. He tried again to kill me but missed again. I clearly recognized him."

"Did he recognize you?"

"I do not believe so. I was charging with the Polish lancers. He shot at me as at anybody else and it was a brave soldier charging by my side who received the bullets."

"You do not suspect that this scamp is a near relative of Mlle. de Gavre, do you?"

"Excuse me, but I know it. Just imagine that at Aranda de Duero, a town you must have passed, I lodged at a Spaniard's, who talked to me of her and her family. Her mother was a Segura and she has a kind of distant uncle—"

"A *Tío*, as they say here. He's that thief."

"This uncle bears her a grudge because she is the daughter of a French general."

"You have hit it!"

"My Spaniard would not tell me his name."

"I shall do so, though."

"I only know that he has sworn to dispossess her of the fortune of which she would make a wrong use—according to his way of thinking. He's a bold knave!"

"*Knave?* you have hit it again. He is the *knave*—the very heart and soul—the chief of the Spanish insurrection!"

"That does not astonish me!" returned the American. "My hidalgo of Aranda told me that this fanatic was busy organizing resistance and he took an active part, indeed, as he was fighting against us the other day at Somo Sierra."

"He is our adversary most to be dreaded," said the Frenchman. "He is capable of any deed—of fighting like a lion, of giving all he owns to the cause he defends—even of assassinating our Emperor. Long ago he was pointed out to the French police. It was he who prepared and directed the revolt in Madrid on the second of May. He speaks several languages and knows the art of disguise like a professional actor. These facts were given to the Empress after the theft in Malmaison, by Fouché, the minister of police. He has been watching but never could capture him."

"I suppose his men could not find him, and yet the rascal was not disguised, since, in the park, I plainly saw he was a Spaniard."

"Perhaps he had reasons not to change his costume that day. It is certain that Fouché sent the villain's description to the Emperor! heaven grant that he may not approach Napoleon, if he contemplates murder! In that

quarter you or I can do nothing, but during your stay in Spain, you may save Mlle. de Gavre's property."

"I should be very happy to do it, but I do not see my way."

"As the Empress condescended to explain to me, the situation stands thus: The young lady's property consists in landed estate situated in the Province of Aragon and a sum of cash to the amount of many millions of *reals* deposited in the Bank of Madrid. The lands cannot be removed and when we become masters of Spain, the heiress can take possession of them. As for the ready money, she cannot draw it from the bank, as—at the time when her mother's brother died, leaving her the sole heiress—our soldiers were forced to evacuate Madrid, where the funds may still remain—for the thief of la Malmaison had not the receipt for the deposit then in his hands. He has it now, for he found it in the casket; but he has not had time to make use of it to draw the sum. If he had it, he would hide it somewhere."

"With the treasure of which my marquis spoke at Aranda?"

"What treasure?"

"The treasure of the Seguras which has been reposing, the story goes, for ages in some vault in the little town of Teruel."

"That's a legend." But the other exists and lawfully belongs to Mlle. de Gavre. When the Emperor shall have subdued Spain, which will not take long, he will use his authority to have it restored to her. The point is to find out where it is."

"That is not easy."

"But it is not impossible, if you stay in this country."

"I shall quit it only if Napoleon goes."

"I do not believe he will make a long sojourn. If matters grow worse with Austria, he will act as in 1805 at the Boulogne camp—leave his generals to finish the work, and he will march upon Vienna. In this event, I advise you to ask to stay here. You will please everybody."

"Who? does Mlle. de Gavre love money so dearly? Why, I would marry her without a dower."

"And thereby do well, as she is bewitching. But what

a success you would obtain at the Tuileries Court if you seize the famous casket! The Empress will trumpet your fame unto the clouds! All around her know the tale now, of the robbery at la Malmaison and you are spoken of like Jason when he went to win the Golden Fleece."

"It is a bright dream, true," muttered Paul Fontenay, "but how can it be realized?"

"By setting off in pursuit of the robber who despoiled your betrothed. Being an Aragonese, he will probably not stir far from his province. You will have no trouble to get attached to Marshal Lannes' army about to overrun that region, and, when there, you will have chances of laying your hand upon the thief—perhaps upon the treasure to boot."

"The thief! why, I do not know so much as his name."

"Probably he changes it oftener than his linen. All the guerilla leaders don odd nicknames. There is one, for instance, whom his nation have surnamed *El Empeñado*, which means 'the Podgy'—nobody knows why, unless from his figure; but our man is properly called Blas de Montalvan. When the insurrection burst out all over Spain on St. Ferdinand's day, he was living at Albarracin, a petty burg a couple of leagues from Teruel."

"Thanks for your information. I hope to profit by it."

"So you have decided to follow my counsel?"

"How are you to have me answer? am I my own master? At any minute, the Emperor may send me somewhere to be killed. And he does not think yet of returning into France, as far as I know. When he does, it will be time for me to take a course."

"You are right, my usually impetuous friend, and, believe me, nobody will blame you if you return with him. If the contrary happens, you may rely on my defending your betrothed."

"Defend her? what danger does she incur in Paris?"

"None that can disquiet you! She loves you, and everybody in the Tuileries knows that, and not one would dream of paying her attentions. But that dreadful *Tio* is the man to attempt to kill or abduct her. He has incredible audacity and knows how to foil the sharpest

vigilance. Fouché asserts that he has many times come into France, and runs in and out as he likes."

"Do not tell me so! I shall be deserting to go and watch over her."

"Oh, do not fire up! Senor Montalvan has much to do here and I count on his soon leaving his bones in his native soil. I have exaggerated the peril and I must lay balm on your heart. Here is a little packet Mlle. de Gavre confided to me for you. I am fulfilling my errand."

Fontenay took an embroidered sachet held out by his friend and, opening it, he found two flowers in it, a marguerite daisy and a forget-me-not.

"Well, do you not understand?" gayly inquired the harbinger. "It is very clear. That means 'Forget not Marguerite!' or 'Marguerite forgets you not!'"

Paul piously kissed this memento of his affianced one, and was about to let his gladness overflow in words, when the state council auditor, not being a lover himself, cut him short by merrily saying:

"Now, my good friend, the greatest boon you can do me is to let me have a doze. My eyes are closing spite of myself. I ask only three hours rest, and you can wake me for dinner."

"It will be a lively one, I promise you," exclaimed the American. "My orderly has unearthed at a wine-shop some bottles of old sherry of which you shall give me an exhaustive opinion. Pleasant dreams!"

When the speaker departed on tiptoe, his guest was already snoring. On going down the stairs, Paul met one of his brother officers looking after him on behalf of the prince of Neufchatel, Major-general Berthier, afterward Prince de Wagram. The order surprised Fontenay from so lately having seen the Emperor, but it was formal and had to be obeyed.

In ten minutes, the lieutenant was ushered into the prince's cabinet, where he was bending over a map. Without raising his eyes, he said to him:

"Go to the Escorial. I am told that the vanguard of a Spanish infantry corps appeared there this morning. Learn all you can about it; estimate its force, and extract all knowledge from the country-folk whom you may meet. Return to Chamartin to report all you have

seen and gathered. Try not to be taken prisoner and move swiftly. The Emperor, who pointed you out to me, has confidence in you. I hope you will justify it. In one hour you must be on the road." Guessing that the young officer might object that he did not know the road to the Escorial Palace, Berthier concluded: "In the head-quarter's court-yard, you will find a Spanish guide. My aid-de-camp will present him to you."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PHANTOM ENEMY.

Fontenay went from the prince's presence in despair, for he was being dispatched to certain death. The vicinity of Madrid was infested by insurgents, who massacred all isolated Frenchmen. The general's instructions were so far from precise that the poor scout did not clearly see in what his errand consisted. For one man to reconnoiter an enemy's corps and value its force is as vague as difficult. The odds were heavily against the officer ever returning who was saddled with this expedition.

On the palace steps the aid awaited him. He heard of his perplexity without being affected in the slightest degree. Fontenay had an order to carry out and it was his business to perform it as best he might. Others had received tasks fully as perilous and had accomplished them without accident. As for obtaining an escort he was not to think of it; to collect one would only delay him, and it was useless to expose the lives of five or six men when one man would be enough to achieve the reconnoissance, if he were bold and keen-witted. This language persuaded Fontenay not an iota, but he did not try to argue with his superior officer from knowing it was labor lost. He let himself be led toward the guide whom the aid guaranteed to be perfectly sure. He spoke French; he had a couple of horses, one for himself and the other for Fontenay.

"Good luck, lieutenant!" said the aid-de-camp, "keep your eye open and all will go well. Get back to-morrow evening at farthest." He spun round on his heels without adding a single word.

"Does the gentleman comprehend Spanish?" asked the guide in rather good French.

The American was almost saying "Yes," when he remembered the suggestion of the well-advised Tournesol and he boldly answered:

"Not a confounded word!"

"Well, it little matters, as I speak French," returned the guide.

By the expression on his features, Fontenay fancied the man was pleased at the officer whom he was engaged to pilot not knowing his tongue, although perhaps merely because it augmented his importance, and this observation strengthened him in the resolve to feign ignorance of the current language. This servant of the enemies of Spain wore an anti-pathetic physiognomy as he consented to take money for betraying his fellow-countrymen. Fontenay was astonished that the life of a French officer should be intrusted to him. But he reflected that there was little choice, as spies were few among the Spanish, which it is fair play to state.

Paul also wondered why he was expected to ride a strange horse and lose the services of his own man.

After these brief thoughts, he concluded that it was a test, and that the Emperor wished Josephine's favorite to distinguish himself; in short, the more difficult and dangerous the ordeal was the more honor would accrue if he successfully acquitted himself. Still, he could not set out equipped as he was, without cloak or sword or fire-arms in his holsters; and he did not wish to go without notifying George de Prégny.

On second thoughts he was not sorry to spare his only war horse, which had borne him from Bayonne and might last out the whole campaign.

He gave the guide orders to follow him with the two horses and walked toward the house where he had left his friend sleeping as under a leaden mantle. Should he awake him? He was puzzling over this question when he ran up against Captain Vergoncey, who asked:

"Where are you going? Do these two Rosinantes belong you?"

"Not to me, but to this kind of muleteer leading them. I must ride one, by order of his highness the prince of Neufchatel," answered the West Indian, shrugging his shoulders.

"What, a mission confided to you so soon?"

"Yes; and mischief take me if I know how to begin it. I am sent to reconnoiter a body of the rebels out by the Escorial. On which side is the Escorial? I cannot even imagine, so that I go at the mercy of my guide, who owns the winning phiz which you see!"

"I pity you, my poor friend! but you are not the first of our cohort who has been sent at random over this dreary country. They never tell you how you are to get out of the scrape, but bid you 'March!' and you have to march. For example, only the other day, at Burgos, as I came out of Berthier's study I met one of our comrades on the stairs trying to sprain his ankle between the balusters, in order to have an excuse to decline without dishonor a commission with which he was charged and which was impossible of execution. He did not succeed in putting his foot out of joint and, as he was a brave fellow, he went! Well, the enemy must have put him out of existence, for we have seen no more of him. What I relate is not encouraging, but how can I help that? It is all in our trade. Besides you have the luck of the New World—you will return, I wager!"

Fontenay but faintly relished this consoling speech, but he did not try to refute the argument, while the captain laughingly pursued:

"Are you not taking the auditor along?"

"No! I shall not see him till the morrow—if I get through."

"Meanwhile, my dear fellow, I will keep him company. I have a number of questions to ask him about the opera. I will call on him this evening."

Paul did not seek to detain this "Agreeable Rattle," who, in the heart of Spain and the height of a frightful war, still thought of the pleasure of Paris, whither he was not sure of ever returning. Paul continued his way to find Jean Tournesol smoking his pipe at the lodging-house door. He raised a loud wail on learning that his master was going off on an adventure without him. Paul cut his lament short by commanding him to bring his cloak and weapons, and as Tournesol inquired what he should say to M. de Prégny, he bade him let him sleep and inform him when he awoke that his host was forced

to go on special service to be no more than twenty-four hours absent.

What was the good of paining him by speaking of the dangers he ran?

In an instant after this summary colloquy, Paul, armed for battle, sat in the saddle and he rode out of Chamartin, flanked by his guide, who appeared proud of having a French officer to conduct.

Sullen though his countenance was, the man had an intelligent aspect. He was young—five-and-twenty, at the most—and rather well built. Although clad like any of those *arrieros* to be met on the highways of Spain leading their mules, his demeanor might cause him to be taken for one of those Salamanca students who go upon their travels in cocked hats ornamented with a wooden spoon by way of cockade, and ring for their supper.

Why should such a one betray his country for the foreigners' gain? Fontenay, who deemed him a suspicious character, resolved skillfully to question him.

He opened proceedings by asking his name, which he learned was Diego Perez. He came from Segovia, where he had studied for the priesthood, but, not feeling any call for the ecclesiastical *status*, he had become a post-boy when the royal post existed in Spain. Since it ceased to be in activity, he earned his livelihood by carrying from one branch of the French army to another those messages with which the great Napoleon's generals intrusted him; he boasted of his admiration for Cæsar, and of his pride in serving him as he considered him the liberator of his country. His enthusiasm seemed a little strained and it had not needed this to fill Paul with distrust. He was more on his guard than previously against this partisan of new ideas, but, for the present, he abstained from farther questioning. Taciturn, like most of his race, Diego did not seek to keep up the conversation.

The country which they traversed was dry and barren; a desert of stones, as Chateaubriand describes Judea. Not a tree or a rivulet, not a house or a mountain peak, was to be spied. All was flat and yellow, and although they were near the capital they met nobody.

Diego had his own peculiar way of riding, which was not to Fontenay's taste. He changed frequently from the walking gait into the gallop, fell back into the trot and then to the pacing; the officer's horse imitated his mate, however hard he tried to regulate the speed, and this ill-trained brute trotted so hard that the rider was broken in every bone at the end of three hours of this varied race. But they had progressed and should be near the shelter where they would have to stop for the night's sleep, as Diego declared that it was impossible to reach the Escorial in this first stage.

In November night comes on soon, and day was fading when Fontenay asked the name of this refuge. With an equivocal smile the guide replied:

"Senor, it is the village of Torre Lodones. It has not the best of reputations. The saying runs of this vile spot: *Cinco vecinos y siete ladrones!*"

Paul clearly comprehended the significance of this local proverb, but he had the presence of mind to ask for the explanation, which the obliging cicerone hastened to furnish him by thus translating it:

"*Five inhabitants, of which seven are thieves—*" the alcalde and his clerk counting double!

"Gracious! your *saw* has sharp teeth, and, it is not inviting. Why should we stop here if it is a den of thieves?"

"Oh, senor, our proverbs are not articles of faith—we have so many! Torro Lodones is better than its fame, and, anyhow, we will not find even five inhabitants. They all ran away as soon as they heard that the French were before Madrid. The only one remaining is an old gypsy of my acquaintance who will get us supper, if your lordship is not too hard to please. Since he has set up as a hotel-keeper in this hole, he does not entertain many travelers, but he always has food in the larder—and he will tell us what is going on at the Escorial."

Our adventurous American was not hard to please, especially since his late journey from Irun to Chamar-tin, but this stoppage for sleep did not promise anything worth the loss of time. Diego was altogether too amiable, and Fontenay began to debate with himself

whether he were not led into a trap. Unfortunately, there was no time to recede.

Before him he descried, upon a height to the left of the road, an old fortress in ruins, with its towers mingling with the evening haze. At the base was the village composed of twenty low houses of the saddest appearance. Pressed to arrive, Diego spurred his nag.

This time, Fontenay managed to constrain his to keep at a walk and, in slowly advancing, he distinguished in the middle of the road, an enormous tree of which the horizontal branches spread out into so broad a dome that a whole squadron of cavalry might be sheltered beneath it. It seemed expressly planted there to favor an ambuscade; night having come, the time was propitious.

The guide was twenty paces ahead of Fontenay who presently heard a voice call out in Spanish:

"Is that you, Diego?"

Fontenay did not hear the reply, but the voice arose again:

"Who are you with?"

"A Frenchman," said Diego, riding nearer the tree.

Thereupon, in the most profound obscurity, a conference took place between half-a-dozen men who spoke too low for their words to reach the officer. It seemed beyond doubt that the guide had lured him among assassins who would not miss him.

Paul believed himself lost, but he did not think of flight. He meant to sell his life dearly. He had that coolness not uncommon in his blood, and he reasoned that these men would have shot at him already if they had meant to use their guns. It followed that they preferred their national weapon, the knife, and would assail him with it as he arrived under the tree.

Diego, their jackal, continued to confabulate with them. Fontenay's horse was accustomed never to pass the guides and he feared that he could not spur it out of a slow pace.

Suddenly Diego drove in both spurs, without turning round in the saddle. The moment had come for the officer to risk all on one dash.

Determined to try this sole chance of safety, he had silently made ready for the charge. After drawing his

saber, which he allowed to hang from his wrist by its knot, he took out his holster pistols to carry one in each hand as, with the bridle between his teeth, he waited for the instant to rush onward. His sensations were those of a man who leaps into a gulf in the hope of saving his life; they did not endure twenty seconds.

Two vigorous plunges with the spurs inspirited the horse into starting off like a cannon-ball. He flew closely past a cluster of men whom he could not count. They did not attempt to stop him—did not even insult him, and he could not see that they carried arms.

He was saved—for the nonce—and he soon caught up with Diego, who had ceased to trot. He could not dispense with demanding an explanation of the occurrence, but he remained sufficiently master of himself to continue to feign ignorance of Spanish.

"Who are those men?" he began.

"Peasants of the neighborhood who dare not return to their farms because they fear the coming of the French."

"What did you say to them?"

"They wanted to know who I was with, and when they learned, they had as much fight as though I led all the demons! They thought you preceded a detachment of your soldiers. But heaven forgive me if I am mistaken! it looks to me, senor officer, as if you had a fright also—for you have your sword drawn!"

"I never have a fear; but I am mistrustful of everything and I take precautions."

"You are very wrong to distrust me. Every day I risk my neck in the service of the French, for the Spanish would hang me without respite if they knew the trade I carry on. I answer for your life, and if any mishap befalls you, the French would shoot me. I like better to receive the fifty *piastres* promised me for bringing you back to Chamartin to-morrow."

This was neatly reasoned. Fontenay had to confess inwardly that his suspicions were only founded on appearances, and that one is often wrong to judge people that way.

"If I should not bring you back," resumed Diego, "it will not be my fault. I cannot answer for our not falling into a band of rebels who would treat us both badly;

even then, I should try to get you out of it. I should invent some story to explain that you are not traveling on military service. That lie would work, unless you *are* the bearer of dispatches from head-quarters and they were found on you—"

"I do not carry any dispatches. To whom should I be carrying them? there are no French at the Escorial. Besides, I am simply a foreigner—an American of the West Indies, who, with the curiosity of natives of the other hemisphere wishes to view your world-famous palace—and the Spaniards who are there, I was told."

"Then we have nothing to fear. We will take supper and have sleep at old Laguna's. We may find some of the neighbors there, but do not be uneasy about them. Early on the morrow, we will be at the village of the Escorial and you will see with your own eyes the Eighth Wonder of the World. If you are not slow over your sight-seeing," he added, with no quaver in his grave voice to suggest doubt of his principal's story, "we may re-enter Chamartin to-morrow at dusk."

This was said so frankly and with an accent of such sincerity that our lieutenant's disquietude gave way to relative security. If this guide entertained the project of betraying him, he would not have dallied so long to deliver him to the Spaniards. For all that, as prudence is the mother of safety, our hero resolved not to cease to watch him for an instant.

Five minutes after the incident which might have turned out badly, Diego dismounted before a ruined house, aided the officer to alight and went to knock roughly on the door. It opened. An old man showed himself, who held a dialogue with the guide in a jargon of which Fontenay comprehended but little; it may have been the gypsy tongue intermixed with old Castilian. But it was short, and he introduced the travelers with their horses into an immense hall, serving at once for kitchen, sleeping-room and stable.

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE ORDEAL.

A huge kettle sang over a fire of twigs burning in one corner, and on a rickety table stood some jars full of wine. These preparatives indicated that the old Bohemian expected customers that evening, and, indeed, five or six individuals were not slow in silently making their entrance. They went to sit on benches at the tables and drank to one another, passing the wine-pitcher from hand to hand and drinking sometimes out of the vessel.

Fontenay supposed that these might be the men who held their *folk-mote* under the tree in the highway, and was not astonished to see them here. He went and sat at one end of the board while Diego tied up the horses to a portable manger which contained only some bran thinned out with water. The customers were dressed like boors, but they might be taken for disguised grandees from their lofty carriage. This is not a rare contrast in Spain, where the meanest day-laborer prides himself upon being an *Old Christian*. and as noble as the king.

The stranger had met Spaniards in his own quarter of the globe, and was not astonished at their grave and arrogant demeanor. Above all the others, one was remarkable by the dignity of his attitude. He let the jar pass without touching it, and the rest seemed to wait for him to lead the talk before unlocking their jaws. He did not hurry himself, for much time elapsed before he called Diego to say to him:

"You know that the French came up on the Valladolid road. Yesterday their vanguard was at Villacastin."

"I know it, senor. But it is not known at their Chamarlin head-quarters. Napoleon believes that the Escorial is occupied by a division of our troops."

"Nonsense! there are only half a dozen monks in the monastery, and not a soul in the village."

This was spoken in pure Castilian, which Fontenay perfectly followed, but he let nothing appear while mentally noting the piece of information.

"The officer whom I bring is sent expressly to see how things stand there," proceeded Diego. "Their generals are always badly informed."

"They will be better informed—if this lieutenant returns to them to make his report."

"I believe, senor, that he will not see any more clearly than his chiefs. We can manage to hoodwink him."

"There is a surer means of sealing up his eyes—it is to hang him."

The scene was shifted. It had not required all the above to let Fontenay divine that the sham ploughmen were insurgents, and very probably important leaders; that the old gitano's *posada* served as their meeting-place and that Diego was in perfect intelligence with them. The unfortunate sub-lieutenant's last illusions vanished, and he was astonished at his having cherished them so long. Nothing remained to him but to prepare to die creditably.

"Senor," said Diego, "I beg your excellency to excuse me for not being of his advice. I believe there are better things to do than kill this Frenchman."

"Do you really dare to undertake his defense?" sternly demanded the person who seemed to command this band. "Are you, then, a traitor?"

"I, a traitor?" echoed Diego; "I, who risk my life daily to bring you information? Your excellency forgets that—if I were bent on betraying you—I could have done so on more than one occasion with impunity. Your excellency also forgets that if I do not bring back this man alive, I can no longer do our holy cause any service, for if I reappear alone at the French head-quarters, it is I whom they will hang."

"You need not reappear there. You will go and join your brothers up in the mountain. You will take up the musket and do nothing but fight for the independence of Spain. That will be better than playing the spy."

"The spy plays a glorious part when he deceives the oppressors of his country. I am ready to give all my blood up to Spain, but I serve her better by watching her enemies and cheating them. The death of a sub-lieutenant will not check the march of their army. If you let me execute the plan which I have conceived, I can arrange for one of their divisions to be crushed, or at least one of their brigades."

"How would you set about that?"

"To-morrow morning I will lead this officer to the Escorial. He will see, with his own eyes, that our troops do not occupy the monastery or the villages; at Napoleon's quarters in the evening, if you will permit me to bring him back there, he will make his report on those lines, and Napoleon will certainly send a detachment to occupy the position he will believe abandoned."

"Well? what will we gain by that? The detachment will join their other army which is coming up *via* Valladolid."

"That one will not arrive this side of the Guadarrama River before three days. To-night, advise the four guerilla leaders who hold the country toward Robledo—send them the order to march for the Escorial to-morrow and entrench themselves there. When the French present themselves, they will find our men in superior force and will be exterminated. Not one will escape."

This discourse appeared to make some impression on the chief to whom it was addressed. He meditated while watching Fontenay out of the corner of his eye. With his elbows on the table and his head pillowed in his hands, the latter pretended to doze.

"Are you sure," suddenly inquired the leader, "that this *gavacho* does not understand our speech?"

"Oh, senor, perfectly sure," responded Diego. "He could not be so easy if he did. You can see that he has nodded off to sleep."

"Or feigns it," growled the rebel, not appearing convinced.

"If I thought so, I should agree with your excellency on the necessity of killing him, for he would know too much already, and on re-entering head-quarters he would

exactly inform his friends—to say nothing of his having me shot."

Fontenay had not lost a word of this dialogue, and most clearly saw how his life depended on a thread. The guide played a double game, and had entered the service of his country's enemies only the better to betray them. One involuntary gesture—a twitch of the features, no more—would have destroyed Fontenay by revealing that he understood the patriots who uttered the secret of their projects.

So far he had remained master of himself, and in the bottom of his heart he blessed the shrewd Tournesol for having suggested the idea of pretending ignorance whenever alone with the natives. Without wincing he had listened to one of the insurgents calling him "*gavacho*", a gross insult which, in Spain, dates from the wars between the Moors and the Christians, and has lost none of the sting by time.

He did not foresee that he was going to be put to a harder test. Judging that the foes would before long distrust his quietude if he prolonged his mock sleep, he raised his head, rubbed his eyes and tranquilly looked at them.

"You are too credulous, Diego," remarked the chief. "The man may not be playing a trick; but I am not sure about his not knowing our tongue, and instead of giving him the benefit of the doubt, I doom him to the death."

The final sentence was emitted in a sonorous voice. Though it was Paul's death-warrant, he did not start. He may have turned pale but his West Indian complexion was one that did not show change of color.

"Senors, I suppose that you approve the sentence," slowly said the leader. "This man would denounce us. He must die!"

"He must die!" echoed in chorus the ferocious jury of this pitiless judge.

"Good. He shall die. How are we to execute him?"

"Blow out his brains here."

"Or hang him to the tree in the road. When the French come up, they will see him dangling."

"It is not enough for the example. We ought to do like the Zamora butcher, who bled one like a calf the

other day, split him in halves like a pig and hung him upon the hooks 'before his door."

"Or, better still, nail him to the tree by the hands and feet like a bat!"

These savage suggestions sent a chill through the hearer's veins, but his face remained as impassible as a carib's at the stake. But if the chief who suspected him, could have laid his finger on his pulse he would have learnt the true state of the case.

"And what do you say, Diego?" questioned the presiding officer of the tribunal.

"Senor," answered the guide, "if we kill him there will be one Frenchman the less, and that will not grieve me, but I affirm more emphatically than ever that it is useless. If he knew Spanish he would be already half-dead of terror, and look! he is yawning widely enough to dislocate his jaw."

This was true enough. Fontenay had the cunning to simulate a yawn in order to exercise his nerves in tension, and the better to persuade them that he was ready to drop with sleepiness and fatigue.

"By sparing him," continued Diego, "you may in a couple of days exterminate some hundreds of the dogs. But, all things considered, I am not overfond of the trade I follow the better to serve Spain, and if you settle this Frenchman to-night, I will go off to-morrow to join the Empecinado's troop, which is mustering in Aragon."

The only counsel who pleaded the prisoner's cause before this hanging judge, Diego, threw up the defense. Fontenay thought how he should die. His pistols had remained in his holsters, but he had not laid aside his saber, and before he was slaughtered he reckoned on showing how many cut-throats a swordsman can kill in an irregular combat.

Their leader, who had not lost sight of him, regarded him more fixedly, and said, after having reflected during several instants:

"The question is to know if it would be better in the interests of Spain to spare him. After having weighed the pleas for and against his death, I believe like you

that we should let him live. The report which he will make to his superiors will be worth a victory to us."

Of all the snares which the wily Castilian had laid for Fontenay in speaking of the tortures destined for him, this was the most perfidious and difficult to avoid, for gladness is less easily dissimulated than fear. (Before the councils of revision for the conscripted recruits, those who pretend to be hard of hearing are always caught by it. When the chief surgeon says in a low tone: "You can go, my boy, you are unfit for service!" they start to leave the room without waiting for the phrase exempting them to be repeated.)

Fontenay could not decamp, but an involuntary movement would have discovered the satisfaction caused in him by the un hoped-for decision of the patriot incarnate, who had only one word to say to have him flayed alive. Not only did he not change countenance, but he had the subtlety to shout to the guide—in French, of course—

"Halloa, Diego! are those honest clowns going to hold you in talk the whole night through like this? I am dying to sleep and you know I must be moving at dawn, for I want to get back to Chamartin to-morrow by dark. Just give them good-night from me and tell them to be off home!"

Evidently the chief comprehended French, for he winked at the guide, who replied to Fontenay:

"Senor lieutenant, they are on the point of going, and you may sleep in peace, as they will not come back. They have a good stretch to travel to get to their villages."

"You see, senor," went on Diego to the chief, changing into Spanish, "we have nothing to fear from this guileless boy. Does your excellency decide to leave him his life?"

"Yes; I will give orders to that effect. Your plan shall be executed and I rely on your returning to witness the extermination which I shall prepare."

"I hope to do better than look on."

"That's well spoken. You are a good Spaniard. I will recommend you to King Ferdinand when we restore him to his throne."

"Oh, senor, I do not expect any recompense. My life belongs to my country. All I ask is to die for it."

"I leave you with Laguna. If anything happens before you resume the road to Chamartin, he must warn me."

"Ha!" thought the West Indian, "this old rogue of a tavern-keeper is one of the gang. I suspected as much, but I am not sorry to be assured."

"Still a word," proceeded the chief, "if you should discover that the French dog is toying with us, and that he does know Spanish, swear to me that you will blow out his brains."

"I swear, excellency."

"Your word suffices me. I am at ease. *Vay usted con Dios!*" This formula signifies: "Go thy way with heaven!" It sounded as a sinister mockery in the lieutenant's ears after the terrible command preceding it; but he played his part to the end. Whatever he said he had not the slightest disposition to sleep after so much emotion, and he determined not to close an eye, for the Spaniards might change their mind and he did not mean to be taken by surprise. His hunger also had fled and he contented himself with a lunch of black bread before lying down on a bench, draped in the horseman's cloak which took the place of mattress and coverlet.

Laguna's cookery did not tempt him, and the old sorcerer might experiment poisons upon him. So he left Diego to regale upon an *olla podrida*, which might have been prepared on a Satanic furnace.

The night appeared long to Marguerite's chosen, who thought of her all the time. Since the Empress had prolonged her stay at la Malmaison, she would still be there. What was she doing? Did she sometimes saunter to the walk where the good Josephine had affianced them? She had not authorized them to correspond with one another, but Fontenay meditated dispensing with the authorization and confiding a letter to the faithful friend George, for carriage to her address.

It would have been wiser to wait until he had done something toward replacing her in possession of her fortune, but the hot-headed American did not plume himself on wisdom.

The night which had commenced so vilely, passed tranquilly. Diego snored in a corner near his horses, and the gypsy stretched himself across the door-way, the door having no fastenings.

CHAPTER X.

A STROKE OF CLEMENCY.

Before day dawned the guide called the officer up to tell him it was time to ride toward the Escorial, which was situated quite close to the inn, but very far from Chamartin.

Fontenay might have excused himself from finishing his journey of reconnoissance, from his knowing that neither the monastery nor the two villages, its dependencies, were occupied by the Spanish; but to refuse to go thither would have been confessing that he had heard and understood the conference of the insurgent chiefs, and he took care not to grumble over taking to the road. Diego was in jovial humor and much more communicative than on the eve. He was doubtlessly congratulating himself—not on having contributed to the officer's safety—but on having had his infernal plan adopted which would terminate in the massacre of hundreds of his foes.

Fontenay resolved to make him pay dear for his subtle treachery.

It was cold weather, but the sky was clear and every thing promised a fine day.

The creole inhaled with eager lungs the air refreshed by the Sierras' snows, shutting out the western horizon. Never had he felt so happy. He had escaped a dreadful death by a miracle, though he could not believe he had definitely saved himself from now knowing the true sentiments of Diego.

"Senor," said this double-faced guide, "have you really any intention of visiting the Escorial palace?"

"I will wait for another time when I have more leisure," responded the lieutenant. "I would rather study the people in the village."

In Havana College, his studies had not been carried very far, but at least they comprised the statement that the gloomy edifice was built and resided in by King Philip II., the son of Charles V.

"That will be a speedy matter, though there are two villages—one above and the other beside the palace-monastery. The good fathers who have remained are not dangerous, for the five of them number four hundred full years together, and they will take pleasure in offering you breakfast."

"It will have to be a hasty meal, then, for I have no time to lose."

A little gallop carried them to the entrance to the lower village. Fontenay's horse seemed to conform to Diego's humor; he had no more whims as over-night; he obeyed the hand and knee and was not inclined to hang back.

The dwellings were abandoned and the streets deserted. All the inhabitants had fled, and they could not be suspected of being ambushed in the environs, as there were no trees. Fontenay made short work of inspecting these hovels and deemed it fruitless to go on as far as the other hamlet, perched on rocks not easily climbed.

He cursorily viewed the palace gardens, built—the fit word, as there is more architecture than vegetation visible—on superposed terraces; only the four walls were left in hastily passing through the palace cellars. Still, he would have examined them with more care if he had not known in advance the state of things. The council in old Laguna's inn had edified him, and he was sure that these solitudes contained no insurgents. He executed his reconnoissance for form's sake.

Still convinced that the officer knew not a word of Spanish, Diego did not hesitate to announce before him, to the good monks, that they would soon have to accommodate three or four insurgent contingents who would lie in wait to cut the French to pieces.

After accepting a frugal repast offered by the monks, Fontenay gave the signal for the departure, and Diego did not require any pressing.

They went through Torro L odones, where the gypsy

--taking in the sunshine, *tomar el sol*, on his doorsill—hailed them with a wish for their pleasant journey. They saw again the leafy tree which no longer harbored the revolutionists, and went on at so good a pace that they were not very far from Chamartin by noon.

The West Indian was determined to have the traitor guide shot, but he took a grim pleasure in drawing him out on the road in chat, the better to convince himself of the knave's duplicity. Diego poured forth invectives against the former government of Spain. He flaunted the most extravagant liberalism; he proclaimed the benefits of the French Revolution which, by the sword of the great general, had regenerated all nations and beaten down all the tyrants. In an earlier period, at the Jacobin's Club, no other language was used by the orators.

Undoubtedly this unfrocked student in theology deserved a dozen bullets for the price of his treachery, and his declamation against the Catholic kings. And yet Fontenay, knowing him to the core by this time, could not help seeing that the man was a patriot. He played the infamous part to serve his country. He was a spy through devotedness, and a traitor out of virtue. If he did not belong to the Spanish aristocracy, he was one of the enlightened middle-class, and he dared an ignominious death every day for the right cause.

The creole could not forget that he owed his life to him. Diego had not saved him out of any friendship, but he had saved him. If he had not intervened between the mysterious and important chief and the prisoner whom he had condemned, the latter would have been stabbed. And was Fontenay to recompense him for this *vital* service by yielding him up to the provost-marshal of the army who would swiftly execute him? He need say but a word to have it done; and they had already passed the outposts guarding the headquarters at Chamartin.

It was his duty, for it might cost the French dear if he let this unalterable foe depart; though not this time, for in giving an account of his mission, the lieutenant would not fail to reveal the plan he had overheard from the guerilla leaders; but how much bloodshed might not

this fellow cause if he did not hand him over to the firing-party?

In spite of everything, he inclined to clemency.

In the best human sentiments a little selfishness enters, and Marguerite's betrothed thought that forgiveness might bring him fortune. The recollection of his idol swayed him.

A hundred paces from the toll-bar of Chamartin, he reined in his horse.

"I have no farther need of you—go!" he said to Diego, who replied:

"Excuse me, senor, I was promised fifty *douros* if I brought you back safe and sound, and I must call for them on the staff-treasurer in person, to say nothing of the horse you ride being mine and one I do not care to lose."

"Do you prize this jade and fifty piasters more than your life?"

"What does your lordship mean?"

Fontenay looked him straight in the eyes and said to him in the purest Castilian:

"I speak Spanish as well as you. I am not deaf, and I was not asleep last evening in the gypsy's house. Do you understand now?"

Diego turned pale, wheeled his horse round and started off at the gallop, shouting this equivocal farewell to the officer:

"I thank you, Sir Frenchman, we are quits. Pray God that we never meet again!"

This might be interpreted in more than one way, but Fontenay did not delay to puzzle out the enigma. He was in haste to complete his errand by making his report to the major-general. But he did not like to go there on Diego's horse, which might oblige him to explain why the guide had given it up without claiming the promised gratification, and he had resolved not to relate the events as they had occurred. He would be blamed for letting the traitor escape. The main thing was for the staff-office to know that the Escorial was not yet occupied by the Spanish, although it would be.

Knowing that his treason was discovered, Diego would

take good heed not to offer his services again to the French.

Therefore Fontenay stopped at the house where he entertained his friend George. To him alone he intended to tell the truth of his adventures. At the door, smoking his inevitable pipe, stood Tournesol, who noisily manifested his delight at his officer's return.

"Take my pistols out of the holsters," ordered the latter, alighting.

"Right, my lieutenant. But this horse? Am I to put it up in our stable?" inquired Tournesol, astonished not to see the guide.

"Drive it out of the town—or sell it, if you can find a purchaser."

"Then that Spaniard who looked so evil—"

"He deserted me on the road and will not return."

"A good riddance! He had a rascal's frontispiece. I was not easy when I saw you going off with the scoundrel. I will sell the horse if only for ten crowns. But what about the saddle, lieutenant?"

"Sell all together. Any news?"

"An hour ago Captain Vergoncey looked in to ask if you had come home."

"I am going to see him presently at staff-quarters. I will walk and I have no time to go up to my room. I will change my dress and freshen up on my return from seeing the major-general. Is M. de Prégny upstairs?"

"No, lieutenant."

"He cannot be far then, as Chamartin is not a large place. Try to find him and tell him I have come back and would like him to wait for me."

"I beg your pardon, lieutenant, but M. de Prégny went away this morning."

"Went away?"

"Yes, indeed—in the carriage that brought him and with the escort he had with him yesterday. The Emperor sent him back to Paris."

"Within twenty-four hours! This is sharp work!" hissed Fontenay, grating his teeth. "If I had only foreseen it—"

"He left some writing for you, lieutenant, in your room—shall I run up after it?"

"No," returned his master in ill humor; "I must go and report. I will read it afterward." He strode away, grumbling: "And I was reckoning upon charging him with a letter for Marguerite! How warfare does upset things!"

CHAPTER XI.

AN ODD BANK PRESIDENT.

A fortnight after his eventful expedition, Fontenay was still at Chamartin, which the Emperor also had not quitted.

All had passed pleasantly at the major-general's, who had applauded him on perfectly accomplishing a difficult task and had immediately utilized the information brought by the sub-lieutenant. He had not been received by Napoleon, over-burdened by labor in the palace, where the fate of Spain was under decision; but he knew that Napoleon was satisfied with him, and he asked no more. But he could not comfort himself for having missed Prégny, forced to travel suddenly. The letter he left contained these lines only:

"Rely on me, and follow my counsel. Stay in Spain if the Emperor returns into France. At la Malmaison and the Tuileries all will be agreeable. Hunt up that *Tío Blas*, and make him disgorge. Send me news of you."

This laconic note had not calmed the West Indian's vexation, and he fumed at the friend who was not to blame as he retraced his road by the imperial command, and he was not in fault because Paul had not returned sooner. What most vexed the latter was his inability to hand him a love letter for Mlle. de Gavre. He chafed the more as he could not take the liberty of writing by the post to a young lady of the Empress' household, and, even then, a battalion of soldiers would be required to escort the courier, often attacked by the guerillas on the highway; unless he liked his note to light the cigarette of a Spanish insurgent.

So he was compelled to champ his curb while awaiting

new war operations to come and distract him, for life at Chamartin had a desperate monotony.

The Emperor had remained here with his staff, but the army had entered Madrid after its capitulation and occupied it to receive the new king, Joseph. He was still in France for the good reason that his subjects were inclined to receive him too warmly.

In appearance Madrid was tranquil, but the May revolt was in fresh memory, and the imperial staff-officers were not allowed to go about separately.

Yet pining away in a suburb at the gates of a capital was a torture of Tantalus, and some found the means to elude the interdict. One of these was Vergoncey, and one fine morning about the middle of December, he suggested Fontenay's accompanying him inside the city walls. The creole did not long to go. His comrade's enthusiastic description had left him cold. His heart was elsewhere, and he would probably have refused to view the sights of Madrid if he had not recalled one of George de Prégny's recommendations for him to verify if Mlle. de Gavre's millions were still in the Bank of Madrid. He had no regular power to draw them; but, if there, the Emperor would probably not refuse to have them restored to the lady who had the right to claim them.

It was a good occasion to try to ascertain the facts, and the chances were that the person who stole the certificate of deposit at la Malmaison had not had time to handle the cash.

On the 30th of November he had faced Fontenay at Somo Sierra and he would hardly have the audacity to enter Madrid, fallen into the power of the French. In all likelihood he would have remained with the rebel bands holding the surrounding country; but he would not stay there indefinitely, and it was important to outstrip him in celerity.

The love-enthralled lieutenant let himself be persuaded therefore, and after being assured that the staff-office would wink at his few hours absence on the excursion, he followed Vergoncey.

It was the first time in his life that the American entered a conquered capital, but he had heard the officers

relate their experiences. Generally the defeated people furnished enough sycophants to form a crowd to cheer the vanquishers. Fontenay doubted this would be done by the Spaniards, yet he expected a peaceful visit in a city under military guard.

He was not mistaken in the sense of no shots being fired upon him and Vergoncey, as they passed in at the Alcala gate; but he was not long in perceiving that the inhabitants would have done it, if they had arms.

The promenades preceding the gate were lonely. In the *Prado* walks, not a woman was to be seen, and very few in the street running into the *Puerta del Sol*. Men, muffled up in their cloaks, darted hateful glances on the two visitors, and the infrequent *Manolas* who passed by ostentatiously averted their heads not to see them, while slyly flashing looks to which Vergoncey replied by twirling the points of his mustache. In those days the *Manola* had not disappeared from Madrid, the type of Castilian ease and elegance, in her short bell-shaped skirt, scarlet stockings, narrow slippers, mantilla, and the long plait of hair, caught up by a very large tortoise-shell comb sloped over one ear.

"Are they not delicious enough to eat!" exclaimed Vergoncey.

"I grant it," answered the creole smiling, proof against the attractions of brunettes, "but I do not believe that our uniform captivates these people. They avoid us as if we were pest-stricken."

"Because those *hidalgoes*, warming themselves in the sun along the walls, are watching them. Let us push on into the central *plaza*."

"I warn you that I am not going to spend my day in rambling the streets. I have a call to make."

"On whom, for goodness' sake? the mayor?"

"No, on the governor of the bank."

"To draw some money? my compliments, you lucky dog!"

"Merely to procure some information."

"I hope that will not prevent you coming into a café I have discovered by the *Puerta del Sol*, where we shall find less forbidding faces and delicious ice-creams."

"Have it so! I will learn my way there to the bank."

They were not slow in arriving at this *puerta*; not a door as the name implies, but an open place, or rather cross-ways, tolerably animated. All the life of vanquished Madrid seemed concentrated in this central point. In the middle rose a paltry fountain adorned with a poor statue of Venus which the populace call the *Mari blanca*. All around, rows of vile buildings deprived of any marked characteristics. Some Spanish were stalking gravely to and fro; others sat before refreshment houses, which were not appetizing. Water-carriers were running about each with a jar under one arm, shouting: "Water!—who wants water?"

Not one French soldier was to be seen. They were kept in barracks, as a measure of prudence; but, at the *Calle San Geronimo* corner, two pieces of cannon guarded by the Imperial artillerists, showed their menacing muzzles to remind the people that any attempt at rioting would be pitilessly repressed.

"Only to think that this is the *Palais-Royal* gardens of Madrid," sneered Vergoncey. "The arcades are lacking—but it is warmer than in Paris, which puts me in mind of your going to have refreshments before you went off upon business."

Fontenay let himself be conducted into one of the cafés, where the two officers had no difficulty in finding room as their entrance created a vacuum. In a twinkling all the tables were left free.

"Clearly enough, we are not beloved in the capital of all the Spains," muttered the sub-lieutenant. "They run away like sheep that spy the wolf. But what is the printed paper they have left behind? how very curious! it makes it plain that we are not liked. Listen to this pretty catechism, which I will translate literally—"

"Yes, you know Spanish," remarked Vergoncey, who was thus at a disadvantage.

"When no Spaniards are by," returned the cautious creole, enigmatically.

This strange and historical document named the Emperor Napoleon, Prince Murat and Godoy, the "prince of peace," as the enemies of Spain. The spirit of the paper was represented essentially by the conclusion that

the French were "recreant Christians whom it were no more a sin to kill than a dog."

"Oh, the monsters! where are they that I may cut off the ears of those who print insults on my Emperor!" shouted Vergoncey, hammering on the table with the hilt of his saber.

This noise had the effect of putting the waiters and master to flight out of the saloon, so that the two officers were alone.

"I have had enough of Madrid," said Vergoncey. "I have no business at the bank, so I am going back to Chamartin, and I will never set foot in this lair of banditti until the day when the Emperor orders it to be blown up!"

Fontenay could not refrain from smiling at this violent outburst of his irascible brother-officer. He thought this ridiculous broadside odious, which the occult leaders of the insurrection had disseminated throughout Spain, but he understood that the Spanish people had good reasons to hate the French. They were defending their independence and acting like fanatics, but fanaticism is often one form of patriotism, and while carrying on war against them, in a quarrel not at all his own, Fontenay did not disdain them. He did not try to induce Vergoncey to share his philosophical ideas, and allowed him to depart without regret, knowing that misadventure would not befall him in Madrid, occupied by the French and overawed by French cannon in the mouth of the principal streets. He was not sorry to be relieved of the companion whose rashness would end by bringing some awkward affair upon them, and he had no need of him to confer with the bank president.

Fontenay applied to the French gunners of the Calle San Geronimo battery for the address of the financial establishment. Not one of the honest fellows could inform him as they knew only their barracks and had never used a bank from their surplus not being heavy enough for investment.

A dozen paces distant, leaning with his back against a house-wall, and wrapped to the nose in a brown woolen mantle, stood a man, covered with a broad *sombrero*. All one saw of him was blazing eyes and two fingers hold-

ing a *papelito*, or cigarette; he eyed the officer with much attentiveness. As he had to inquire his road to the bank of some citizen, this one would *answer*, he hoped, as well as another, and, bowing to him politely, he put his request in very good Spanish. The man appeared surprised to hear a Frenchman speak Castilian so well and kept his reply in abeyance, probably to gain time to recover himself.

"Senor," he said at length, "the bank is in an out-of-the-way quarter—near the Royal Tobacco Factory and the Casino de la Reina—almost at the farther end of the town."

"I thank you, senor, and if you will only start me in the proper direction, I will ask again on the road."

The Spaniard again reflected before speaking as follows:

"Senor, it so happens that I dwell in that part and I was about going home."

"How marvelously into one's wishes that falls! I will be delighted to take the stroll with your honor!"

"Beg your pardon! I must entreat you to limit yourself to following me."

"Good! I understand you! you do not want your fellow-citizens to see you arm and arm with a Frenchman?"

"That is it indeed, and I will be much obliged to you if you do not speak any more to me; when we arrive I will point out the bank to you and continue my road."

"As you please, senor."

Fontenay could not recover from his surprise at finding at the outset so obliging a grandee, but he had no reason particularly to distrust a stranger and he esteemed himself very happy in the opportunity to profit by his willingness. He followed him in consequence without any misgiving.

The man went through a street perpendicular to that of San Geronimo, walking with measured steps and the gravity beseeeming a Castilian without stopping or turning round, and almost brushing by the shut-up houses. Fontenay regulated his pace by his, resolved to observe the treaty concluded with this courteous Madridian who consented to do an enemy of his country a service. They proceeded eastwardly. The farther they

left the Puerta del Sol behind, the more deserted became the thoroughfares.

They met nobody but hags squatting on the pavement before baskets of Spanish walnuts, and at longer intervals, muffled-up men who exchanged a glance with the silent guide.

One street succeeded another, with a cross-road here and there, surrounded by squalid dwellings. The journey lasted three-quarters of an hour with no appearance of reaching its termination, for on went the Spaniard with the same slow and even tread.

Fontenay wondered if he were not being trifled with. It would be a good trick to play a foreigner, to lead him through Madrid to cast him adrift in an out-of-the-way region where nobody would set him on the right road. He went on farther in his surmise, not suspecting an ambushade. It was daylight and while superior orders kept the soldiers from showing themselves in the streets, there were pickets in various places.

Besides, Madrid was much less extensive than Paris, and the route would have to come to an end before long as the then existent wall could not be far.

So Fontenay marched onward, lured by the hope of learning soon what had become of Mlle. de Gavre's estate liquidated into gold. He would have gone to the world's end to restore it to her; hence he might endure a little fatigue to gain news of the sum constituting the greater part of his fiancée's inheritance.

At last at the end of an almost interminable street, the Spaniard, of whom he had not lost sight for a single instant, halted briefly, pointed to a house on his left and strode on, without looking back to be assured that the sign had been understood.

Fontenay saw him turn to the right and vanish down a lane where he was not tempted to follow him.

The edifice designated as the bank was a heavy one with nothing striking about it, but the front bore an escutcheon in stone showing the three lily-flowers of the royal house of Bourbon. All the windows were closed in with iron shutters, but the large carriage door-way was open, and no sentinel guarded it.

Did this signify that there was nothing worth protect-

ing in this massive structure, which might sustain a siege? The lieutenant put this question to himself and was the more inclined to believe so from nobody passing in or out. Ordinarily there is some stir about houses where money payments are made, and however precarious credit was then in Spain, one might fairly be astonished at the national bank receiving so few visitors on a business day.

Had it suspended payments? But in this case there would be people about, perhaps more than customary, for those ruined by a bankruptcy hover round the scene of wreck as if in hopes of fishing up the waifs of their engulfed fortune.

Whatever the reason, it was easy to enter to make inquiries, as it was open to all comers.

Fontenay passed under an arch into a court-yard where he found nobody. He saw a janitor's lodge, but it was empty, and, farther on, grated wickets, behind which no clerks were seen and no silvery chink was heard.

It was a bank without life—the mere shell.

The officer was about to turn back when he remarked at the end of this corridor, a broad flight of stairs which seemed to lead into the chief officer's rooms. Perhaps they had remained at their posts after the disaster, like those senators of ancient Rome who sat in their curule chairs when the barbarians violated the majesty of the Forum. From the rarity of such an event and to appease his curiosity, the creole went up the stairs. At the first floor, he arrived before a door on which was painted in large black letters a Spanish inscription signifying "Governor's Bureau." The governor was probably in and not alone, as two voices speaking tolerably loudly were audible.

Fontenay gently knocked.

The conversation continued. He rapped more loudly and it suddenly ceased. A scuffling sound of chairs being pushed back indicated that the speakers had risen, but the door did not open. The impatient soldier turned the knob, but there was some pressure inside preventing the door giving more than a little, so that it stood ajar. This most unexpected resistance only excited him. He shoved with all his force so abruptly that he almost

overthrew the man opposing his entry and sent him to come into collision with a table in the middle of the cabinet, whither he rushed after him.

During this jostling, Fontenay caught a glimpse of a second person who disappeared in another room and hastened to barricade himself within it. The officer divined without difficulty that he had surprised a conference of persons evilly disposed toward the invaders. Interruption of a business talk would not have so greatly frightened the speakers.

Upon examining the one who stayed in the office, he had the greatest difficulty in not bursting out into laughter, for the person was grotesque. Short and obese, he resembled a pumpkin stood upon thick posts. He was clothed in black from top to toe in the old Castilian mode, and clean-shaven as a canon of the church. His terrified countenance would have been a fortune to a consummate low-comedian. He had staggered back to the bureau loaded with papers, against which he propped himself erect, with haggard eyes and gaping mouth. He wanted to speak, but the words stuck in his throat.

Fontenay took pity on the poor gentleman and asked in Spanish:

"Are you the governor here?"

"Ye-es," faltered the worthy; "that is, I mean I was the governor—and if your lordship comes to deposit funds—"

"Not precisely. I am an officer on the staff of his majesty the Emperor of the French."

Far from encouraging the unfortunate financial director, the declaration threw him into indescribable agitation.

"I have nothing left—not a *maravedi*," he protested, lifting his hands to heaven; "your general commanding over Madrid took possession of our bullion in the name of the French Government."

"Calm yourself, senor! I am not charged with any additional requisition and I present myself purely in my personal capacity. I simply ask for information."

The governor's features cleared and he mumbled an "*A la disposicion de usted!*" which was contradicted by the frightened expression he still wore in some degree. Evidently he wished all inopportune callers in *hades*.

"I forewarn you that the matter may take some time," went on the visitor wickedly. "You must excuse my disturbing you and detaining you, as you are not disengaged."

"I beg your pardon. I vow that there is nobody here."

"So," thought the intruder, "it is plain the person I surprised is hidden in the next room. Why did he run in there when he might have got away by the back-stairs? In that case," he proceeded, out aloud, "allow me to take a seat. I have been enjoying a long walk through Madrid and I am not sorry to rest before returning to our quarters at Chamartin."

The governor hastened to offer an arm-chair to the visitor, whom he would have preferred to brain with it, and he went round the table to sit there as if behind a rampart.

"Senor," Paul commenced, "you hold on deposit an important sum legitimately belonging to a young lady whose mother, a Spaniard, became French by her marriage."

The governor stared at the ceiling, pinching his chin between his fingers like one trying to recall a forgotten matter.

"Her mother was a Segura—of the town of Teruel," resumed Fontenay.

At this moment, he heard the inner-room door faintly creak; the disappeared visitor must have had his ear to it and had pressed too hard; he was listening.

"It is an illustrious name among us, senor," exclaimed the Spaniard. "That family goes back to the time of the early kings of Aragon."

"I know it, but—"

"Still, I do not remember the bank receiving any deposit from a Segura."

"It should have been made by the young lady's uncle seven or eight months ago. He has died since, and she is his inheritress."

"This she will have to prove to enter into possession; but, I repeat to your lordship, I have no memory of such a deposit."

"It should appear on your books."

"Certainly it must, if effected. But, alas! I am

no longer in a position to verify the fact, for all our registers were seized at the same time as our cash and securities. The bank has been considered a state one. Since your fellow-countrymen occupied Madrid, it has been managed by one of them, who will inform your lordship on application."

"I will make it," said the disappointed Fontenay.

"I am grieved at having no power to serve you on this occasion, sir officer, but I am nobody now! You must have seen below that the house has closed its clerks' wickets. All our staff have gone."

"Except yourself, senor."

"Oh, I only came to-day to empty my desk drawers, where I left my correspondence, and I am not coming again."

"No more am I," muttered Fontenay, vexed at having taken a useless step. *Adios, senor!*"

He rose, and the host hastened to do likewise, only too happy at coming out so nicely of a thorny interview. He showed the officer to the staircase with profuse salutations, and did not return into his office until he had seen him go down a dozen steps.

The lieutenant departed discontentedly. He was fully aware that he had acted blunderingly and ought to have made inquiries at head-quarters before applying to a dismissed functionary, Spanish in spirit and sworn foe to the French. He did not doubt that this obsequious official execrated the invaders who had stripped him of his lucrative functions. The ex-governor's patriotism was doubled with personal rancor.

"I should not be surprised if he were conspiring against us," the sub-lieutenant said to himself. "Who's the person confabulating with him, I wonder? Some leader of a band like those I found disguised as country clowns in the Torre Lodones tavern. Why may it not be one of them—their chief? He stole away as though he feared my recognizing him, but he must come out some time. I have a mind to lie in wait for him in the street."

The supposition was rather far fetched, for the man could not have seen Fontenay bursting into the bureau; but, since his recent adventures, our once trustful colonial friend doubted everything and everybody. Besides,

he had been mystified and he felt bound to obtain revenge.

On leaving the house, as silent as the castle of the Sleeping Beauty, he looked about in the street for a corner where he could post himself to watch the bank, without being seen. He spied a dark blind alley appearing suitable and plunged into it, keeping close to a wall, with the resolve not to budge until he saw the suspicious visitor emerge.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KING OF THE BEGGARS.

The vigil self-imposed might be long, and it was doubtful that it would finish in an interesting discovery, yet Fontenay had a presentiment that he would not lose his time.

After five minutes waiting, a man showed himself without leaving the bank, and stood as sentinel by the door. This was the obliging Spaniard from the Calle San Geronimo whom Fontenay had wholly forgotten.

The situation was becoming complicated.

Why should this person retrace his steps if, as he said, he lived in this ward and should have been home. Was he also waiting for the individual whom Paul waylaid, or for the bank director? What link united these three men? If they knew one another, what were they plotting together? Fontenay understood nothing of it, but he vowed to watch to the end.

The man in the archway continued to smoke his everlasting cigarette and moved no more than a statue. The passers-by did not appear astonished by his immobility, and did not pause to stare at him. They even seemed to envy him, for to bask in the sun is the preferential pleasure of your true-born Spaniard.

Fontenay also took care not to trouble the peaceful enjoyment of this honest citizen. He did not lose sight of him, while wandering afar on the vast field of conjecture. He marveled why this man had so eagerly offered to guide a French officer, whom he would perhaps have stabbed if he had met him alone in the country. It could not have been to decoy him into a trap, as he had quitted him after pointing out the bank.

These meditations were interrupted by the appearance

of another man under the archway. This one wore a hat, larger at the crown, like a bell inverted, and had pulled it down on his eyes. He said nothing to the former, but in passing him by, he exchanged a sign of intelligence which did not escape the creole's attentive eye. Without a word, the pair trudged off, side by side.

Fontenay let them gain an advance before leaving the no-thoroughfare on tiptoe and following them at a distance in expectation that the last-comer would show his countenance, though he had visibly sought to screen it. This happened ere long.

Fontenay saw him stop to ask his companion for a light for his *papelito* and he could be discerned by the glow. An exclamation of surprise almost broke from the pursuer. The colloquist of the Madrid bank president was the thief of la Malmaison, and the insurgent of Somo Sierra—the dare-devil who had twice tried to kill Marguerite de Gavre's intended. It was Blas de Montalvan, *Tío Blas*, as the insurgents called him—the distant relative of Josephine's reader, the furious captain of irregulars who had sworn the extermination of the French. This was the unseizable Proteus who wore all disguises and seemed to possess the gift of ubiquity, flitting from Paris to Somo Sierra and thence into Madrid with unheard-of rapidity.

At last Fontenay had found him, but he could not go and grasp him immediately, as he would have done in France, for he did not perceive a French soldier, and the Madridians would not have failed to defend their compatriots. This is saying nothing of "Uncle" Blas not being alone, and his acolyte looking a sturdy blade.

The best course was to follow them up to passing a picket, where the officer would find soldiers to lend him a helping hand. The worst that could ensue was their entering some house before meeting an armed post or a patrol. In this case, Fontenay would have to note the house and send, by virtue of his rank, a squad of troopers to break down the door if there were a refusal to open it.

He set to trailing the two Spaniards, as the hunters say, in his native canebrakes, but he was out of practice and he had no vocation for man-hunting. The detective

is born and requires a long apprenticeship to become perfect.

Fontenay followed too closely and was not slow in seeing that he had been noticed at their heels.

This was the more unfortunate as the Tio must have seen him through the key-hole of the inner room, where he was hiding and heard him speak of Mlle. de Gavre to the bank governor. Hence he knew with whom he had to cope and would maneuver in consequence.

Already their direction changed, now suddenly turning to the left, a little farther to the right, and sometime going over passed ground—in a word, they tried to baffle the tracker.

Unacquainted with Madrid he did not at all know where he was, and this region was a true labyrinth—a tangle of ways where Dædalus would have been puzzled and, to cap the climax of defeat, a whole population of beggars swarmed the sordid alleys; such mendicants as Callot has etched, and seen only in Spain; tatterdemalions transformed into thieves after dark.

At every corner one whined for alms, perhaps hiding a blunderbuss under the perforated cloak. To Tio Blas and his companion they did not hold out the hand; they merely bowed to them, but when Fontenay came up they would not let him pass and sprawled between his feet.

The blind-from-birth suddenly recovered their sight and the maimed found limbs again. Soon Paul had a dozen at his heels; the only sound was from crutches on the pavement. This ragged army no doubt waited only for a signal to fall upon him all at once and fell him with clubs and wooden legs.

The pair he followed did not have the air of perceiving this, as they jogged on without turning, and let the unclean cortege grow.

Patience was not the American's virtue. He could bear no more, and facing round, he thundered to the shabby crew:

"Keep off, vermin!"

They receded, most likely from not having received the expected mandate to attack him; and, seeing that he kept them in respect, the officer renewed the briefly interrupted chase.

This check had occurred at the corner of a narrow street, and when he turned it, he saw nobody before him. Yet the empty street was too long for the Tio and his accomplice to have gone through it even at a run. Therefore some door must have opened to admit them.

The lieutenant searched for it without finding. On both sides from end to end, it was closed in by high walls without apertures. A ladder or wings would be needed to surmount them. Still the two Spaniards had disappeared there, whether credible or not, like phantoms, in broad daylight and the heart of Madrid.

Here was ample to stupefy the explorer from the New World, but he did not know when he was beaten.

He stepped up to scrutinize the walls closely, as well as the paving-flags. He could not discover secret doors, traps, or gratings, marking the ingress to some subterranean, and he was tempted, on finishing this minute investigation, to believe that Uncle Blas was a wizard.

It was a bad idea of his to stop to disperse the ragged pack. Montalvan and his confederate had profited by the delay to disappear by some process known to them alone, and Paul did not doubt that the trick had been preconcerted between the insurgent leader and the rabble in this kind of Alsatia.

The band had returned on the track of the officer, but while he was seeking for the outlet, each bead in this living necklace had unstrung itself and dropped off so that, when he reached the end of the suspicious way, he could not descry one. They had carried out the chief's orders whom they obeyed and they had doubtless been charged to do nothing beyond facilitating his flight.

What occult power did this man of mystery exercise to command as well the vagabonds of Madrid as the artillerists of Somo Sierra? It was alarming, and a sub-lieutenant was not of the meet stature to reduce this dangerous foe of the French to powerlessness.

He did not give up the hope of taking revenge, but he began to understand that success would not be his, unless he obtained assistance of those more powerful, even if he had to sue the Emperor himself.

Forewarned, Napoleon would certainly take heed of this revolutionist who controlled unknown forces and might at some instant attack his person. And Napoleon would not refuse to take in hand the interests of the Empress' young ward, menaced by a kinsman who did not shrink from crime, to deprive her of her fortune.

Fontenay had acted clumsily in acting alone, when it was easy for him to have recourse to the intervention of the governor of Madrid instead of applying like a simpleton to the bank governor discarded by the French. The military authorities would soon have the confiscated books examined and traces found of the deposit made by Marguerite's dead uncle, the true one, of whom she was sole heiress.

And a superior order would suffice for the other's arrest. The masters would not have thought it a great matter to close the gates of Madrid for two days and, if need be, demolish a whole district to seize one of the heads of the insurrection. The belligerents acted more unscrupulously. On both sides there were the same furious massacres, and the most atrocious cruelty was permitted. Whoever commenced it, the other party had applied the *lex talionis* in all its rigor.

Though not savage, Paul Fontenay would not hesitate to have a dozen men shot, to destroy the implacable persecutor of his betrothed, under the pretext that the end justifies the means.

He did not amuse himself by continuing the fruitless researches, but, by walking straight forward without asking his way of the residents who would have pretended not to understand him, he finally arrived at the Atocha gate and thence, by following the deserted walks of the Prado, that of Alcala, by which he had entered the city.

He had left his horse at the guard-house. The officer commanding the post informed him that Vergoncey had taken his and might be at Chamartin since an hour before. The more than chilling reception of the gentler sex had greatly contributed to drive the lady-killing captain from Madrid, humbled in his conceit.

For other motives, Paul was in haste to regain headquarters. He leaped into the saddle and crossed at a

hand-gallop the mournful plain extending on the north-west of Madrid. He remarked an unaccustomed movement. The outposts were double and detachments were falling back on Chamartin.

He longed to inquire the cause of this stir, but it is not correct, militarily, to put questions to officers on the march with the troops, and he did not stop until at his housedoor.

There he found Tournesol who said, shaking his head: "It appears that all is going wrong, lieutenant. Everybody is on the move. The rumor is that we will decamp. I will not be sorry—I begin to pine in this hole."

Fontenay listened for no more. He tossed the bridle to his orderly and ran to the head-quarters, where his brother-officers would certainly tell him what was going on.

The palace yard of the Dukes de l' Infantado, Napoleon's provisional residence, was crowded with dispatch-bearers ready for duty, and Paul had some difficulty in cleaving a passage to the room of the aid-de-camp, where he spied Vergoncey writing out an order.

"Great news, dear boy!" shouted the latter. "The English have landed at Ferrol in Galicia and are marching upon Madrid. The Emperor will start to-morrow to meet them and he takes all of us with him. Things are brightening up! We shall have some fun!"

"The English?" interrogated Fontenay, not in the current of European politics.

"Why, yes," returned Vergoncey. "They are coming to the help of their good old friends the Spanish."

"Their good old friends! how's that? I thought that at Trafalgar, three years ago, the English—"

"Oh, at Trafalgar the Spaniards were on our side and the English sunk their war-ships like our own. But all has changed since that time. They are now as thick as thieves in a fair—which ought not to astonish you, I think! for the French, and their sons, the English are the hereditary foes."

"Oh, I know very well that they are always fighting with America. When I was a child, they blockaded us at Martinique."

"And again since the rupture of the peace of Amiens.

We shall never make it up with them. But, between ourselves, I would rather contend with them than these garlic-eaters who torture their prisoners. An officer captured by the red-coat is honorably treated."

"I do not care to try the experiment."

"Nor I; but one never knows what may happen, and it is always a comfort to expect no flaying alive or roasting over a slow fire. However, the Emperor is going to beat time thoroughly. He is marching straight upon them with Soult. Ney will fall upon their flank. Not one will ever embark again. But it will be hard work. We have to maneuver in a mountainous country."

"Naturally; this confounded Spain is mountainous everywhere."

"True; but it will be in the dead of winter, and if, the weather turns bad, our troops will suffer much more than in Navarre and Aragon."

Fontenay snapped his fingers. He had not crossed the Pyrenees to loll at his ease. He was resigned before hand to all privations provided he conquered promotion, and he expected occasions in this fresh campaign would not be wanting for him to distinguish himself.

"From which side do the English come?" inquired he

"The same where you went on scout the other day. They will try to get through the neck of the Guadarrama, but we shall be there before them and cut them up into cruppers. They do not suspect our waiting for them and will be caught in a trap."

"Unless these rascally Spanish warn them. They have their spies everywhere—in Madrid, and perhaps even here at head-quarters."

Then the British will beat a retreat and we will drive them into the sea."

Fontenay, who had seen everything on the bright side at the outset, was no longer such an optimist and he thought the captain's predictions required diluting.

"So," he asked without any transition, "we are not going toward Teruel?"

"Teruel! where is your Teruel?"

"A little town of Aragon."

"We are turning our backs on Aragon; what does it

matter to you? do you particularly want to visit Teruel? I suppose that it must be some vile seaport, according to our troopers."

"I am convinced of it and I do not know why I asked the question. It little matters where I go so long as there is fighting."

The captain believed as much as he liked of this. He finished transcribing the order and rose to take Paul's arm and draw him into a corner of the room.

"Well," he inquired with a joking air, "how about your call which retained you in Madrid? it strikes me as a lengthy one."

"I had much difficulty in finding out the bank."

"Then you really were going to the bank!"

"Indeed, yes; I repeat, for some information."

"Well, did you obtain it?"

"Not precisely, but I did not waste my time."

Paul did not intend to impart his business to Vergoncey, who was a frank chatterer, but the latter, who did not want to know it, contented himself with this evasive reply.

"We are to start in the morning," he observed. "You will receive your marching order this evening. I believe you will be in the vanguard, and I, also. My packing up is done. I advise you to get all ready and return to dine with me."

"Most willingly! that is agreed."

Fontenay longed to be alone to meditate upon the new situation made for him by the departure of the army. He was not satisfied in his heart. He had grown used to doing something for his beloved at the same time as he served Napoleon. But here was the Emperor about to drag him to the other end of Spain, far from the province where she owned the property he had sworn to regain for her, and where her uncle threatened her prospects.

Farewell to the chase of the Tio, which he had begun without bringing him to bay, though he calculated upon renewing it with better success! Farewell to the hope of avenging himself for the shot of pistol and of blunderbuss! Blas de Montalvan, soul of the revolt and head of the guerrillas, would certainly not quit the cen-

ter of the national insurrection to join the British, who had no need of auxiliaries of his kind. He would remain in Aragon or in Navarre, unless he continued to conceal himself in Madrid to direct from there the operations of the bands holding the country-side.

Oh, how Fontenay regretted not having charged him in the street, sword in hand, instead of constraining himself to "dogging" him as any police-officer would have done as well—not to say better. By piercing the brigand, he would not have recovered the Segura treasure, but he would have delivered the Segura's heir-ess of an implacable enemy.

Now he had missed the chance, which most probably would never again offer itself.

Dissatisfied, the lover mused once more upon his betrothed, for forgetting whom he had reproached himself sometimes since he was with the army. The events of the war banished the recollection of Mlle. de Gavre, which raced back to him on the days when he met a disappointment. In this he resembled "*Le Joueur*," in Regnard's immortal comedy, who little cared about his lovely Angélique when he had won but adored her when he lost.

Fontenay felt another and less gentle passion awake and grow—that for adventures and warlike exploits, which creates great generals. He dreamed more often of battle than of conjugal bliss.

"If this goes on, I shall end by loving nothing but glory," he said to himself on regaining his lodging through streets full of soldiers.

Tournesol made a diversion in the ideas engrossing him. Fontenay announced the expedition, and on the orderly learning that they were going to fall upon the "beef-eaters," as he called the English, he expressed his joy, as became a "frog-eater." He had never fought with them, but he hated them. He had heard from his school-master that they had once occupied Gascony, and he never forgave them for having quaffed the good wine of his ancestors, the Tournesols of the fourteenth century.

On another point he shared the feelings of Captain Vergoncey. He congratulated himself on no longer having to carry on war with any but a civilized nation, who treated its enemies humanely, instead of daily

exposing himself to being impaled or quartered by ferocious guerrilleros.

Lieutenant and private, both entered into the change of conflict better equipped than when they came to Spain. Fontenay, who had money, had renewed his stud at Chamartin at little expense, as horses were not dear after the recent battles. He had bought two spare ones, his battle-charger among them being a splendid dark bay with Arab blood. As an officer of the imperial staff, he had two men to groom them and lead them on the march, so that Tournesol's post became almost a sinecure.

Fontenay had also been newly attired by a master tailor of the guard, so that he might have ridden without blushing for his appearance before the Empress on the Tuileries palace balcony in the Carrousel square, and even before Marguerite de Gavre—who would have been proud of him.

Alas! Paris was remote, and many of those departing for war on the morrow would never more behold it.

But Fontenay relied upon his lucky star; and Tournesol, who was not homesick, never fretted to know in what corner of the earth he laid his bones.

But Paul more than ever deplored the absence of his friend George. He longed to say good-bye to him before marching on the enemy, and speak at full length of Marguerite. The note left by the auditor had not soothed his disquiet and he did not expect to receive another during the opening campaign.

To drive away his dark ideas, the lieutenant dined at the staff-mess that evening. Bumpers were drained to the annihilation of "perfidious Albion," the extermination of the irregular bands, to Joseph, I. King of Spain, and to Napoleon, Emperor of the French, then to the sweet-hearts left behind them, so deeply that many lost their wits.

This was pardonable in young officers who daily risked their lives. Our hero kept his coolness, and the wine did not cheer him, for he came out of the mild revels with gloomy ideas and a bad headache.

If only he had been ordered to march toward Teruel he should have been less sad, for he chafed at having

to go far from Aragon, the land of the Seguras, with no hope of ever again seeing this promised land.

He forgot the wise proverb which says that "All roads lead to Rome."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KEY TO THE SITUATION.

For six days the French army had been marching. It had not encountered the British, but at the foot of the Guadarrama Mountains, it had met the terrible winter of the high level-land of the Castiles. Notified by the Spanish that the Emperor in person was advancing to block their way, the English had fallen back by forced marches and nothing had been seen of them but their rear-guard, which the French had not been able to overtake.

It snowed, and the furious gales drove it blindly upon the soldiers' faces. Thick ice covered the steep road winding down the Sierra's side. Men fell and the horses foundered.

In advance of his staff, Napoleon strode afoot, leaning on Berthier's arm without any escorting platoon.

Paul Fontenay had kept his footing, as the ever-prescient Tournesol had his horses and the lieutenant's rough-shod; but Fontenay, if dismounted, would not have ventured to shun the fatigue of the ascent when the Emperor trudged like the meanest camp-follower.

The West Indian had never been at "such a fête," and suffered more than the others from the Siberian temperature. But he held out sturdily, and Tournesol, who followed him, dragging along the two extra horses bought at Chamartin, did his best to sustain and enliven him. Cold and fatigue had not extinguished his Gascon gayety and he joked incessantly instead of grumbling. He bantered the English as "lobsters," because they were clad in scarlet and because also they "walked backwards;" he derided the Spaniards because they had not showed the tips of their noses since there was no more sunshine to

warm them; he even made sport of the weather which had turned against the French, saying that it ought not to "look blue" when gray, and that, being gray, it ought to be neutral!

Fontenay admired the recklessness of the trooper who had no promotion to expect, for he hardly knew his letters, and he said:

"The Emperor needs fifty thousand soldiers like you. He could dispense with the others. Did you hear them a while ago?"

"Which lot?" inquired Tournesol. "Lapisse's division? dainty dogs who growl because the way is not as wide as the Paris to Toulouse highway and because their 'bread-basket' has been empty these twenty-four hours? If I were Napoleon, I would have a dozen of them shot! But you will see, lieutenant, that they will sing another tune when they have had something to eat this evening. I am hungry, too, and I am freezing, but I do not complain like those whimperers who ought to be packed back into France."

"I dare say they would not be sorry!"

"They are nice ones to complain when the Poles, who had no bones to pick with the Spanish, have come five hundred leagues upon the Emperor's order to be knocked over the pate in this scoundrelly country."

"Yes; they are brave fellows. I like serving them; but they have remained with the Aragon army and we are not taking the right road to meet them."

"It may come round to that, lieutenant!"

This dialogue was interrupted by Captain Vergoncey, who had stopped by the roadside unable to go any farther; he waited for Fontenay to ask if he had not a drink of brandy to offer him.

Tournesol held out his canteen, which he had taken care to fill that morning, and the captain took a draught which thawed out his legs and unfettered his tongue. Less resigned than Paul, he considered this march in the snow devoid of charm, and he did not shrink from expressing his discontent aloud.

"What a trade!" he said; "oh, when are we going to make war in Germany? What would I not give for the quarrel to break out with Austria! The Emperor would

be obliged to cross the Rhine and we should be in the game, while—if he obstinately sticks to personally commanding his armies in Spain—the end will be his assassination and all of us remaining here. While, if we moved upon Vienna, we might get three or four days in Paris."

"My own wish!" sighed Fontenay, thinking of—we know whom.

"Your friend the auditor is there toasting himself in a warm fire-place corner, while we are shivering here. Oh, those civilians! they have the soft life, the Tuileries court, balls, theatres—and we, the bullets and bruises, mud, bivouac under the snow, all the thunder and no sunbeams! I should not mind it if we had any fighting, but you will see, my dear fellow, that not a shot will be fired. The English will not make a stand. Their coming was not enough in earnest for us to disturb ourselves. Chamartin was not full of maddening joviality, but we were not so badly off; and, again, there was Madrid at the door, and in time we might have tamed the Spanish."

"I doubt it," observed the American, shaking his head, "and I am glad I did not please them."

"Oh, we know where your heart is! Friend George told me about it before he set out homeward. But I do not compliment you because it is not merry to be betrothed when unsure about seeing the lady. I never think of wedlock. It will be time enough for that when the treaty of universal peace is signed!"

Fontenay said not a word; he thought the captain right and envied his philosophy. But it did not depend on him to partake of it, as his heart was gone, and he did not yearn for this confidant, little suited to understand his love. Vergoncey did not persist and went off to rejoin the staff, soon stopping with the Emperor on the culminating point, where a colossal lion in granite marked the boundary of the two Castiles. Fontenay halted here also but not for long.

At the end of an hour Napoleon resumed the journey, and the descent, more arduous than the ascent, only ended with the night.

It was worse next day and the following ones. The frost was succeeded by rain falling in torrents. The English were in full retreat and closely pressed, but they

were superior in swiftness, and though the roads were so precipitous, left behind them not a gun, caisson or even a live horse. Their cavalry had the order to shoot dead any unfit for marching, and to prove the order had been fulfilled, they were bound to cut off and send in the foot branded on the hoof with the regimental number.

The only engagement went against the French. The Douro had been crossed without striking a blow; Benavente, occupied by the English, was approached and the Esla had to be crossed to expel them; it was rather broad and swollen by the rains.

General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, commanding the French van, composed of Mamelukes and the *Chasseurs de la Garde*, was not the man to stop for so little. With this cavalry he had to swim the stream and he drove the British back from the other bank upon the town; but numerous squadrons had returned his charge so as to carry him into the Esla, where two-thirds of his soldiers were drowned and he remained prisoner in the enemy's hands.

This was on the 31st of December.

The year was ending badly and in the evening at headquarters when this check was talked about, nobody was light-hearted. Fontenay was less so than the others, as the Emperor, since they left Chamartin, had not appeared to perceive that he existed; not an order had been given him and he had scarcely been glanced at.

The Empress' favorite began to fear that he had fallen into disgrace, for his brother officers took the cue to treat him coolly, except Vergoncey, who was as amicable as ever.

Poor Paul wondered how he had sunk into the shadow. Tournesol perceived the change and tried to cheer him by saying it was Napoleon's way, and quoting examples of officers "shelved" during a whole campaign, but brilliantly recompensed on the first occasion for employing them. But Tournesol did not succeed in encouraging him.

Fontenay was at the point of despairing to make his way in the imperial household and thinking of requesting as an only favor to be sent to serve in some regiment anywhere in Spain, with a preference for the Aragon

army, for more than ever he dwelt upon the thought of recovering Marguerite de Gavre's fortune.

Night fell, and in the open air, near a large fire, the Emperor, surrounded by his whole staff, was completing the reading of the reports on the unfortunate skirmish which deprived him of one of his best cavalry generals. Pale and grave, his countenance stood out brightly illumined by the flame upon the dark background of the cloaked officers. It expressed the most severe discontent, and every one awaited in anxious silence for the master to speak. His glances wandered over the circle formed by the aids-de-camp without resting upon any one. They all guessed that he was seeking for one to be charged with an important errand.

Not at all hoping it for himself, the American had not stood in the first row. His heart beat at the thought that he was still again to miss an occasion to signalize himself. He was no longer exalted by action as at Somo Sierra. He was losing countenance when he saw the imperial eyes fasten themselves on him, and above all, when he heard the Emperor call him by name while beckoning him.

"He is going to send me into the army," said Paul to himself, ever haunted by the impression that he had incurred the wrath of the great man whom he admired and loved.

Fontenay stepped from the line to advance up to three paces from the Emperor, who said:

"You are to start straightway. March till you meet Marshal Bessières. Tell him that I am sending infantry to support him, but my order is for him to cross the Esla this night with all the cavalry under his hand. Put yourself under his disposal to find the spot favorable for fording. There must be a ford. Find it by questioning the peasants and try it. I choose you, because you know Spanish. When assured, by actually crossing, that the river is fordable, return to report to the marshal; and you may stay with him. To-night Benavente must be ours, because I mean to enter there in the morning. You will join me there. Have you understood?"

"Yes, sire."

"Go! and do not get killed."

The audience was finished. No reply or question was allowable, and Fontenay took care not to utter either. To obey was all, and he hastened to leave the ring of officers and run to his horse. Several hands caught at his to press it on the way. The Sovereign's favor had returned to him and won him these tokens of sympathy, which but faintly affected him.

All he thought of was the happiness of being restored to grace, and to be well received by the Emperor when he should have accomplished his task. He did not doubt his doing so as it was plain. This time it was unlike the errand to the Escorial, when he had to survey villages supposed to be occupied by the enemy, at hazard without positive clues. He had but to carry an order to an illustrious marshal and eventually serve him as scout. If not easy, the task was at least clearly defined, and Fontenay was not astonished at receiving no more detailed instructions from his knowing the Emperor's habits. In the same way as Napoleon was explicit in dictating a general plan of operations, he was concise in his instructions to the officer charged with executing them. He relied upon the man he selected, judging, with reason, that he should be left some freedom to act on his own impulse in unforeseen cases.

The happy sub-lieutenant went on this expedition as to a feast, in search of a general whom he had never seen, on a road unknown to him, on a dark night and in dreadful weather.

Tournesol had not flinched when his officer commanded him to remount his horse, and in ten minutes he was trotting by his left hand, without burning to know why and whither.

Without slackening the pace, Fontenay informed him, which drew his laconic reply: "Gcod again!"

They could not go astray as the clearly traced road crossed a plain and would end nowhere but on the Esla, which flowed from northeast to southwest, and would inevitably stop them.

After an hour's rapid march, Tournesol's exceptionally sharp eyes saw lights; not being camp-fires, Fontenay supposed they shone in the windows of the foremost houses of Benavente.

The river would not be distant. Indeed they soon heard it rumbling like a torrent, and a ringing "Who goes there?" in French betokened that they had arrived at their outpost guarding the approaches. The lieutenant made himself known and summarily explained his errand to a light-horse sergeant, who offered to conduct him to the marshal.

They found him on the waterside, busy with one of his aids in examining the perpendicular bank to seek for a practicable declivity, and very highly irritated at not discovering any. He protested when Fontenay repeated the Emperor's order word for word; he alleged the profound darkness, the violence of the current and his uncertainty as regarded the situation of the English, who perhaps occupied the opposite shore. He concluded by saying that the crossing was impossible.

It was a repetition of the dispute between the Emperor and one of his bravest generals before the storming of the Somo Sierra batteries, with the difference that the objections arose from the chief and not from the inferior officer. As Fontenay persisted, the marshal said to him, just as Colonel de Piré had to General de Ségur a month previously: "Go and see for yourself!"

"*Monsieur le Maréchal*," bluntly replied the West Indian, "his majesty sent me here to ascertain."

"Are you ready, then, to cross the Esla alone?" queried Bessières.

"With my orderly—yes, marshal."

"You will both be drowned."

"I hope not, marshal."

This dialogue took place in the shadows, so dense that the younger officer could not define the lineaments of his celebrated superior. He only saw a man of tall stature, and heard his voice tempered by a southern accent; that was all.

"Lieutenant," said Tournesol, "if there must be a dead loss, better let it be mine. I will go without you."

He also spoke with an accent, and Bessières, recognizing it, called out:

"This is a Gascon, eh?"

"Yes, marshal! I come from Lot; I fancy we are from the same part."

"I suspect as much. So you offer to cross alone?"

"And to come back again to see if there be footing for the horses."

"Risk the drowning, then, since you are bent upon your course."

"I am going, marshal."

Fontenay intervened by saying:

"Marshal, the Emperor gave me the order to test the ford myself. I should be dishonored if I did not carry out the order."

Bessières had not expected this contest for self-sacrifice, but it did not displease one who loved brave men.

"Come, come, I see you are not daunted, and it shall not be said that I stood in the way of your promotion. Make the trial, since you are bound to do it, and try to succeed. But do not return—for you would be lost. If you do attain the farther bank, give us only a token of life. The stream is not so wide but that your voice will reach this point. If we hear you, we will answer. If we do not, we shall conclude that the current carried you away, and I will not expose my cavalry to suffer the same fate. All I can do is to read your name out in the order of the day."

"But if I return?" questioned the fiery American with an assumed meekness not exempt from wit.

"I will name you in my report to the Emperor and your act of devotedness will be reckoned as a brilliant deed of war. Go! and when you land, try not to be captured. The British are not far off. Perhaps they will not fire on a solitary horseman or two. This morning they fished several of my men out of the river who were drowning. But I do not suppose that you long to pay an enforced visit to England."

"I would rather be slain. If I do not call out, marshal—I shall be dead."

On this word Fontenay urged his horse forward and Tournesol followed. The problem was to find out the flaw in the natural obstacle to be overcome to take possession of the little town of Benavente. Fontenay's instinct bade him seek this point by going down the river and he soon had the satisfaction of finding a gradual lowering of the bank. The slope conducted them to the

water's edge, and they saw in the mud, gleaming with the fluid, where the hoofs of horses had trampled a road before they came.

"We've hit it, lieutenant," said Tournesol, "and if you will believe my report—"

"Stop!" Fontenay interrupted, "you are a brave fellow and I am pleased with your intention; but it is useless for you to risk the crossing. You were not detailed for the service. Stay here while I go over. If I go to the bottom, go and tell the marshal."

"How can you think of that, lieutenant! he would have me court-martialed for deserting my superior—and quite right, too! That is not what worries me, though, but if I let you go without me, I shall be a coward, and I will not have it said in Gascony that Jean Tournesol quailed. It will be told there, for the marshal belongs to that part and he will tell the tale."

Under any other circumstances, Fontenay would have laughed at the soldier's simplicity, but he was not in the mood when danger was so great.

The Escla rolled its turbulent waters with dreadful impetuosity, the wind raged and showers fell at intervals which blinded the two soldiers. Yet there was no means of drawing back or of preventing Tournesol from sacrificing himself. Fontenay was still wavering about granting him leave to follow when he heard him hum the children's song of "The Broken Bridge" (*Pont Cassé Les Canards l'ont bien passés, etc.*)

"The ducks have gained the other beach,
Tooral, looral, lay!"

Not to be outdone, Fontenay joined in on the same tune:

"And though no stones the bottom reach,
We will make our way!"

On, into the main channel!"

"Well and good, lieutenant," exclaimed the subordinate, "we shall see if the water is pleasant. It does not have that effect on me, but pooh! we must take the rough with the smooth in war times."

"Is this the ford?" queried Fontenay, speaking to himself.

"My idea is that we have alighted on it at the first plunge. Troops of horse have passed here, for the bank is churned into mire. It is the ford, for here our light horsemen crossed this morning."

"The river must have swollen since they got over for the rain has not stopped falling."

"Well, lieutenant, our horses must swim it. We will get through with a wetting up to the shoulders. That happened me more than once last year in Poland. It does not kill a man."

Fontenay, although he had not had the experience in the 1807 campaign, had swum a bayou and a tropical torrent on horseback, and, being a good rider, he was pretty sure to come handsomely out of the transit.

"Look you, lieutenant," said Tournesol, reading his thought, "the main thing is to let the steed shift for himself by slackening the reins, so his action is not fettered. Steer with the knees, and one may hold on by the mane if there be any danger of being swept away. It is as easy as the telling. If you will listen to me, we should bear to the right, because, if the ford lies before us, as it seems to me, we had better strike above it than below; for, in the latter case, if we lose footing, we cannot go up against the current and it will carry us heaven knows where! I will take the lead anyway and you can do as I show you. This time you will be second, lieutenant, but you know that in the procession the priest walks last."

So much courage and good humor removed Fontenay's hesitation and he did not protest against the arrangement proposed by the valiant Gascon. The latter urged on his horse, and, turning at the moment of riding into the water, said with comic gravity:

"To-morrow is the first of January, lieutenant! allow me to wish you a happy new year! 1809 has not yet commenced, but nobody knows what may happen before midnight, and I hasten to present my good wishes!"

"Thank you, old hero! to-morrow you shall have my gifts!"

"Oh, I crave no other than the pleasure of piloting you into a safe port and remaining in your service."

Whereupon, I make the plunge! Take the pace from me and ride steadily!"

Fontenay was absent in thought. Fancy had carried him far from this lugubrious river. The mention of New Year's Day by Tournesol recalled that of 1808, passed in the Tuileries amid the dazzling luxury of the imperial court. Marguerite de Gavre was there and they had begun to love one another without telling of their love.

What a contrast!

Now it was black night, and if he succeeded in crossing the tide, death might be awaiting him on the other side.

Paul also recollected that he wore on his heart the sachet embroidered by his betrothed and brought by George de Prégny; in it she had put two emblematic flowers to signify: "Forget not Marguerite!" and he hoped again that this amulet would shield him from all harm.

He had placed himself behind his man and entered the water. It rose to the horses' chest but their hoofs touched the bottom. Undoubtedly this was the ford. The difficulty was not to deviate from it, and following Tournesol's advice, they marched obliquely to the right to cope with the current. They had hard work to resist, but they advanced to the middle without losing foothold. Already they saw the seemingly steep bank confusedly, and so near that they did not doubt they could reach it without accident.

CHAPTER XIV.

"FORGET NOT MARGUERITE!"

At this very moment a voice from the right bank challenged in French: "Who goes there?"

"France! the Emperor's staff!" responded Tournesol. "That," said he to his superoir, "that is one of our chasseurs who has stayed on the farther side after our engagement this morning. So much the better! for he can tell us if there are any English about.

"You, there!" resumed the voice, "you are not in the right road. There's a hole before you and you'll fall into it. Take a course a little more to the right."

For a man facing the horsemen "the right" was their left, exactly the contrary direction to that Tournesol was following, but the obliging soldier who cautioned them, ought to know what to say as he had crossed the Esla before them. They hastened to perform the evolution indicated.

All went wrong. The ground suddenly failed under their horses' hoofs, which sank and struck out for the shore. Surprised by this mishap, Fontenay embraced his steed's neck, the shock having made him lose his stirrups. He uselessly tried to recover his seat, and his strangled horse sank lower and lower. He would have gone under with it when Tournesol, who had scarcely kept his own saddle, caught him by the cloak collar, shouting:

"Let go the neck, lieutenant! cling to me and try to tread water!"

Fontenay undertook to do this. Left to itself, the horse was carried away like a feather, but the rider kept afloat. Tournesol held firmly and the current hurled them toward the bank, not far, and, by a concurrence of good fortune, not very steep at this spot.

After reaching land, the lieutenant drew a long breath like a man hauled up out of a chasm and thought only of thanking heaven for the succor in a hopeless case; but Tournesol swore like a pagan at the evil giver of advice.

"Oh, the villain! fie, the brute!" he roared. We should have reached land without wetting our knees but for him! I want to know what he meddled for? we were going on in the right road and he amused himself by telling us the wrong one!"

"He mistook, with a good intention," muttered Fontenay.

"Unless he did it expressly. Oh, I could shake him! he has put us in a nice position: only one horse between two! and not yours either! that's on the way to Portugal, whither I heard that rascally river runs, and we can hardly wade after! But the scurvy soldier who played us the trick cannot be far, and he shall pay for the joke. Come, lieutenant!"

Dragging his horse by the bridle and followed by his master, he reached the ridge of the bank, but he saw nobody.

"Where has the scamp gone?" he queried.

"He perceived the folly he committed and took to his heels for safety, of course! It is not worth while to pursue him, for you would not overtake him, and, before all, we must advise the marshal that his cavalry can cross."

"Yes, provided they go two by two without departing from the ford. It will not be easy to explain that across the stream with the roar of the wind and the rushing of the water."

"Let us try, though!"

"Try it is, lieutenant—but if ever I catch that idiot who—Halloa! here I am nearly breaking my neck now! Upon what the mischief have I stepped?"

"On a dead body," muttered Fontenay, through his clinched teeth.

"That is true. One of our mamelukes—and many another, too. There has been hot fighting here—see the *Chasseurs de la Garde*—red-coats, also—and horses! what a mountain of horses!"

Tournesol did not exaggerate; the ground was strewn with corpses. The fiercest part of the conflict had happened here, but after the English had badly beaten the French and hurled them across the Escla, they abandoned the battle-field and none were visible but the dead.

"Not one to bar our crossing, lieutenant. This is the time to call the comrades over."

Letting go his horse, which had no desire to stray, Tournesol planted himself on the extreme edge of the bank, made a speaking-trumpet of his hands held together and set to bellowing with all the strength of his lungs:

"There is a ford, and the right bank is not guarded!"

No doubt the summons was lost in the noise of the river and the rumbling of the storm, for no one made answer.

"I foresaw this," grumbled Tournesol, "and the marshal might have thought of it, too. But the fault is done and the only means of repairing it is to go over and tell them the story—all the more because they cannot pull through without me. Now that I know the way, I can serve as guide for the crossing."

"What! do you purpose crossing the river again where we both nearly went under?"

"Again, and again, since I shall come back at the head of the column. You may do some fine talking, lieutenant, but you cannot act like me from your horse being gone, and you have had enough of a bath! if you try it again you will catch a cold. But I have a tough hide and go through water as I do through fire. Mark time to warm yourself until I fetch over the friends. The marshal will gladly give you a horse till the Emperor's arrival and your orderlies' bringing up the extra mounts. Not one of them equals the bay Arab—but they will carry you all the same."

Upon this consoling peroration, he got into the saddle and headed for the river. Though it went against Fontenay's grain to let him go, he was obliged to do it for want of any objections to the brave soldier's reasons for renewing the perilous passage alone. The younger man felt wholly out of condition to undertake swimming it again; before ten strokes he would have gone to the bot-

tom, so exhausted was he. It would be uselessly throwing away his life. But on the other hand, at any price it was imperative to inform the marshal that the right bank was not occupied by the enemy, or an operation of war would miscarry on which the Emperor placed much importance. Without news from the staff-officer, the general would conclude that he had fallen into English hands and await reinforcements before engaging against superior forces in an affair likely to turn out as a defeat, like the morning's one.

Paul had nothing to reproach himself for. It was not until after almost mortal wrestling that he let the heroic Tournesol go. He was not left on a bed of roses. Indeed, soaked from head to foot, Paul shivered in the chilly night while drawing his cloak tightly around him as a poor protection against the blast, and stamping to try to warm himself without success.

At first he tried to catch Tournesol cleaving the Esla's torrentuous tide, but the gloom was so thick that he soon lost sight of him. He drew back from the edge to trace a ring in which he tramped round and round in the hope of restoring the circulation of congealed blood. A lugubrious course, as it lay among heaps of the dead. He had to make circuits to avoid treading on them and in spite of the care he took, often tumbled over a corpse stretched on the ensanguined ground.

It was war beheld again in its most sinister aspect, and the field of carnage sickened his heart.

How many obscure heroes had fallen here, the victims of military duty, far from their native land, and some for a cause not their own: these Mamelukes, for example, who had attached themselves to Napoleon Bonaparte's fortunes and followed him into Spain, as Cæsar's legions followed him of old unto the confines of the Roman Empire. The simile is a little strained, and, to tell the truth, did not present itself to the American's mind, having no time to carry his classic studies very far; but he felt keenly how little a sub-lieutenant's life weighed in this giant's struggle between three nations.

No cowardly thought mingled with the bitterness of his reflections, and, shaking off the ideas besieging him

he resumed consideration of the dangers threatening him on the bank where he stood alone.

What would become of him if the marshal did not think proper to attempt the crossing, and more than that, if Tournesol did not come back? He ran great risk of dying from cold and hunger, or attack from the camp-followers who roamed through the night to strip the dead—human hyenas of the battle-field with whom Spain was infested in this atrocious strife.

The incident marking the close of his passing over the Esla, returned to memory. Who was the man whose perfidious advice had nearly cost him his life? No doubt a Frenchman, as he had hailed them in their language, and, certainly, a traitor who had endeavored to lead them to their loss by changing their course.

Why had he disappeared as they set foot on the bank where he stood? was he hiding to rush, in an unguarded moment, upon the isolated officer? If the villain took advantage of the murkiness to attack him, what resistance could Fontenay oppose—exhausted, almost weaponless as his pistols had remained in the holsters and would be useless from the priming being wet, if he had them.

His saber hung from his belt, but it was not a very dreadful weapon when wielded by his now frozen arm; he had barely the strength to draw it from the scabbard. In case of having to defend himself Paul could only trust to the arrival of the vanguard, guided by the intrepid Tournesol, who would not require goading to run to his rescue. As yet there was no stir on the left bank, whence he expected comfort; at least, he heard no sound indicating a forward move of the marshal's cavalry. Nothing save the dull rushing of the river and the bellying of the wind blowing off the other shore without bringing that clanking of the swords against the stirrups which betrays from afar the march of a body of cavalry.

To listen Fontenay stopped beside a mound of the dead; here had been a hand-to-hand combat of French light-horse and English dragoons. Men had fallen with cleft skull or perforated breast, and two horses lay there, shot dead with small arms. Lying upon one another

they formed a breastwork behind which a stubborn soldier might have sheltered himself to maintain firing, in imitation of the American hunters who make their ponies lie down, and kneel themselves to shoot over them, resting the rifle-barrel on the side of the animal trained to be a living rampart.

With outstretched neck and attentive ear, Fontenay turned his back on this cadaveric pile. He was so near it that his cloak hem brushed the helmet of a dragoon extended across a horse opened by a shell. He did not think of turning as, since a few seconds, he seemed to hear at a distance bugle-calls, sounded in a low tone—short notes repeated at regular intervals.

"Tournesol has got across," said Paul to himself, "he has made his report—the marshal has issued the order for all to mount—and as my man will take the head of the first troop, our men cannot miss the ford and they will not require more than a quarter of an hour to cross. I hope I shall not be frozen stiff before then," he mentally added; "I feel the chill rising to my heart, and I have not my spirit flask. I fancy a sup of brandy would set me right. I hope Tournesol has not drunk all his, and when he comes he will save my life a second time—but by the strong waters!"

He resumed stamping where he stood from inability to run up and down to keep warm. He still listened with attentiveness, and soon very distinctly heard splashes as from a heavy body falling about in the water.

"There they are!" he muttered.

Then a horse neighed. No farther doubt was possible; a detachment had ridden into the stream and would soon be over unless some accident supervened.

The sub-lieutenant felt like going to meet the horse-men so impatiently awaited; but he reflected that they would land rather pell-mell and tumultuously race over the level land toward Benavente, which they would hope to take by surprise. If he were in their road, they might trample upon him, taking him for a marauder, from knowing no better, or cut him down without warning. This is why Fontenay deemed it more prudent not to stir from his stopping-place a little aside on a knoll.

At this emergency other sounds attracted his attention

—not coming from the river-side and inexplicable at the first. It was like a rumbling on the far edge of the plain, perhaps from heavily laden vehicles on a paved road. He quickly guessed that it was the enemy's artillery galloping off with the rearguard evacuating the town. Had the English been advised that the French cavalry were coming to attack them or had they received orders from their head-quarters to fall back on their main body, beating the retreat? It little mattered which if they were retiring. The French horsemen had still ample time to pursue them, if on the point of landing. At any instant Fontenay expected to see them appear with Tournesol at their head.

He was not deceived, for almost instantly burst forth hurrahs and bugles sounding the "Forward!"

Fontenay had been for the past instant looking toward Benavente. On these warlike sounds heralding his comrades he was turning to see them when a man sprung up abruptly from behind the rampart of corpses, threw himself on him with a dagger in his hand and struck at him, yelling in Spanish:

"Die, devil!" (*Muere Demonio*).

Paul received the stab full in the chest, and so violent was the shock that he fell backward. In falling, he could hear Tournesol's call:

"Lieutenant! Where are you, lieutenant?"

That was all.

Tournesol had passed over the shallows at the head of the file and was first to land on the right bank. He had done his duty in guiding his comrades, but he was not bound to dash in chase of the foe retiring from Benavente. While the light-cavalry were forming for the ride, Tournesol dismounted and came in search of his officer, loudly calling him. He knew pretty nearly where he had left him and was not long finding him lying on the frozen ground, speechless, and without movement.

He believed him dead; he rushed forward to lift him up and on taking him in his arms, felt that Fontenay's heart still throbbed. A thin thread of blood trickled over the stabbed officer's uniform coat, and Tournesol, an expert in such matters, saw immediately that a bullet had not inflicted that wound. Was it the cut of a sword

or a bayonet? Who could have delivered it? None was here but the dead, and the wounded man was in no state to furnish explanations to Tournesol, who remained in despair unable to help him or carry him away.

Only the cavalry laggards passed by, thinking but of joining their squadron. The infantry would not come up till the following day when a bridge of boats would be constructed, and with them the munition and hospital corps. Would there be time to save Fontenay? Would he live long enough. Tournesol feared not, but he did all he could to revive him. His canteen, which he never laid by, was still half-full of brandy. He poured a mouthful between the wounded man's lips, whose eyes opened. He heaved a deep sigh and tried to sit up. Surprised and delighted by this miraculous resurrection, the orderly aided and supported him and renewed the alcoholic remedy—his only one available. Evidently Paul was not death-stricken, since he could drink. It was through cold that he had lost consciousness rather than the stab.

"I feel better," he stammered.

"It will be nothing," said the orderly. "But, lieutenant, who treated you in this manner?"

"I hardly know—I was freezing—I fancy I fell asleep."

"But this?" went on Tournesol, unbuttoning the officer's coat, "it looks like the stab of a fencing foil. Yet you have not been fighting a small-sword duel?"

Paul drew his hand across his chest and removed it smeared with blood. Memory returned to him and he muttered:

"Yes, I remember now—a man rushed at me and stabbed me—I thought it was a blow with the fist, but it was so heavy that I fell."

"It was a knife cut—in the right place—just over the heart. Luckily the point did not penetrate deeply, for you would have been killed outright. Your cape seems to have been doubled there, so that you owe your life perhaps to your tailor."

Fontenay felt over his shirt and found ensanguined the talisman he always wore next his skin—the sachet embroidered by Marguerite de Gavre. This was wadded and

had broken the blow so that the knife had only gashed the flesh.

"I had a forewarning that it would save me," thought Paul, raising his eyes in gratitude to heaven which had protected him.

"What a piece of luck that the ruffian did not finish you," observed Tournesol. "What was he like? did you see his face?"

"Scarcely—yet it seems to me it was not unknown—I believe, Spanish."

"Well my idea is that it is the scoundrel who tried to lure us into that hole! he spoke French in calling out for us to *oblique* instead of keeping straight on."

"I have it!" exclaimed Fontenay, beating his brow; "it's that wretch Diego!"

"Who's Diego?"

"The guide given me at Chamartin to conduct me to the Escorial. I did not recognize him at the moment when he assailed me but I am now sure. He speaks French as well as you and I."

"Only to think that you might have had him shot at Chamartin when you learned he betrayed you! he rewards you richly for letting him off!"

"Awhile ago when he hid away after giving us the false advice, he did not know he had to deal with me, and when he stabbed me he could not see my face."

"What! are you taking up his defense? Oh, lieutenant, you do not know what a people these are! they make less bone over slaying a Frenchman than a dog."

Fontenay did not argue; the *eau de vie* had revived him for a space, but he felt weakening again. The cold spread and his eyes closed in spite of himself so that Tournesol, who had seen soldiers die in the icy bogs of Poland, doubted not that his officer would never wake if he slumbered now. He caught him up in his arms, forced him to stand erect and with incredible efforts contrived to hoist him upon his horse which he had led along by the bridle.

Fontenay helped him slightly and could hold up in the saddle, though feebly. Their goal was Benavente where they might find a house, if not a hospital to shelter the wounded man, and a bed to lay him upon.

They reached it with pains but without impediment, without any idea that it was the last stage in this unfortunate expedition. Fontenay lived and his wound was not serious, but one of those fearful fevers seized him next day, which decimate armies and attack soldiers exhausted by fatigue and privations. The doctors who saw him did not conceal from Tournesol that they had scant hope of saving him. This was known among the staff, who believed him lost, so that not one brother-officer came to bid him farewell, although the Emperor stopped many days in Benavente, previous to resuming pursuit of the English.

Fontenay wavered for a fortnight between life and death until the vigor of his constitution prevailed and he entered into convalescence at the beginning of the third week in the new year, 1809.

Tournesol, never quitting him, had watched him with a father's care and might boast of having materially contributed to his cure.

Fontenay had deeply suffered without much consciousness of his state, for delirium had not left him. In his sick-bed dreams he saw the atrocious visage of Uncle Blas, and sometimes Diego Perez's, as he bounded, dagger in hand, over the mound of corpses. He called on Marguerite incessantly.

His situation looked gloomy when he could study it. Benavente was occupied solely by the stores of the army on the march, and hardly any news of the Emperor came here. It was known only that he had reached Astorga and that the English had retired to Corunna, where their fleet awaited them. Nothing was known of his plans.

Fontenay anxiously questioned himself as to what Napoleon might do with him. In a war, as elsewhere, "*les absents ont tort*," and there is little doubt that the Emperor no longer recollected the under-lieutenant charged by him with a perilous commission, but, though he had achieved it, failing to return.

Nothing came from Paris. A whole regiment was required now to escort the mail-carrier.

Despairing in this general silence, Fontenay was beginning to regret that fever had not swept him into the other world, when Tournesol brought him a letter one

morning which the commandant of the town had received with the official dispatches from head-quarters. This blessed missive came from Captain Vergoncey and much surprised Paul on reading it. It was short but taught him much in its few words:

"MY DEAR BROTHER OFFICER:—We believed you were gone, and I swear that I sorrowed for you. We have just learnt that you have victoriously come out of the scrape. No one rejoices more heartily than I, and I try to be the first to announce that you are made a captain! Yes, my dear Fontenay, captain! The Emperor appointed you lieutenant after Somo Sierra, but it appears that some blunderer neglected to inform you officially. This time, on the report of Marshal Bessières, his majesty has promoted you to a captaincy and your commission is on the way to you.

"Two grades in less than two months! splendid! but you have handsomely won them. The marshal says to everybody that he owes the power to cross the Esla to you. All my congratulations! You no more fear water than fire! What a pity you are not coming into Austria with us! you might cross the Danube by swimming! I suppose you know the war is decided upon? To-morrow we leave this vile hole, Astorga; in a week we will be in Paris and in three months in Vienna. But comfort yourself for not being of our party. The Emperor would certainly have brought you along if you had been fit for marching. To give you time to recuperate, he attaches you to Marshal Lannes' staff, who commands the siege of Saragossa, and will be called into Germany as soon as the city is taken. That will not be long and we shall soon meet. So, get ready, my dear Fontenay, and good luck! Do not forget me, and write to me at Paris where I hope we shall spend the winter in company."

"I see," muttered Paul, "it is decreed that I am to leave my bones in Spain, and never to see Marguerite again!"

All predictions do not come true, but Marguerite's betrothed was not at the end of love's labors, though wrong in his forecast.

CHAPTER XV.

A "BROTHER" OFFICER.

In less than a month a complete mental and physical change took place in Paul Fontenay. At Benavente, he could hardly stand, and saw everything under a cloud. On arriving before Saragossa, he was as strong as a bridge, felt happy at being in life and cared not an atom for the future. This is the ordinary effect of unexpected cures, and his promotion to captain's rank had not a little assisted in restoring his good humor; but it must be added that, before starting for Aragon, he had received a letter from George de Prégny putting an end to his loving unrest. Mlle. de Gavre spoke of nobody but her absent worshiper. The Empress had shown her a laconic note from Napoleon written on the 31st of December.

"MON AMIE:—I am in pursuit of the English. They flee terrified. Bad weather. Lefebvre is a prisoner. He was skirmishing with three hundred light horse—dare-devils who swam a river and rushed amid the heavy cavalry; they slew many, but Lefebvre had his horse wounded on the return, and was captured. Comfort his wife. Young Fontenay bears himself well, which pleases me. *Adieu mon Amie!*"

Marguerite had learnt this note by heart; she had repeated it verbally to Prégny who transcribed it under her dictation for transmission to his friend. Fontenay was proud of the passage concerning him. The Emperor had written about *him*, the youngest of his body-guard officers, at the time of sending him upon a commission, and he had brilliantly justified the choice. After this testimony to his services from the great warrior, Fontenay might depend on rapid advancement, as he could on the constancy of the adorable girl whom he loved—at a dis-

tance, alas! But he hoped to see her soon in Paris after the taking of Saragossa.

Joyous and ready, he arrived to take part under an illustrious leader, in the terrible siege which retained the French army for six weeks before a town unprovided with regular fortifications.

It need not be said that Tournesol remained his orderly, and the journey they made on horseback through two insurgent provinces had furnished the faithful and ingenious Gascon with more than one occasion to demonstrate again his bravery, devotedness, and the resources of a mind fertile in expedients.

They reached Saragossa two days after the general assault of the 27th of January, which had not entirely succeeded. Two out of four storming columns sent at once on different points, had been repulsed by the besieged; the third had taken a breach and maintained itself there with much difficulty; but the most important, the center, had captured with enormous loss the fortified Santa Engracia Convent towering over all the outworks of the Spanish. This partial success was decisive, for it forced the defenders to abandon their advanced positions and shut themselves up in the town.

The war on the ramparts was succeeded by that in the streets, ten times more dreadful.

As at Somo Sierra, the American arrived at the critical time.

It was the close of the day and the setting sun fully illumined the imposing cathedral of Our Lady *del Pilar*, with its quaint three-storied belfry and small glazed tiled domes in the Moorish style; the slender Seo tower and the octagonal one which leans over like that of Pisa. The picture was splendid and the sight-seer might have believed he was at the gates of a rich and peaceful capital but for the continuous thunder of the cannonading.

Tournesol declared that he had never seen anything finer in Spain and that Saragossa would make a good garrison city when taken.

But his captain had not come to admire the site, and he hastened to make himself known at the first post they met. The officer commanding informed him that Marshal Lannes would certainly not receive him that even-

ing in the house where he had established his quarters, behind the trenches, as he was not well. He pointed out to him a place where were camped the Fourteenth Foot and a regiment of the Vistula Legion, and gave him a soldier to conduct him there.

Followed by Tournesol, Fontenay found the French and Polish officers installed in the ruins of a villa half demolished by the cannon on the plaza; their men were no better lodged for, shelter being deficient, they had dug lairs and covered them with boughs. Tournesol turned into these burrows with them and was received as a comrade, while the officers feasted his captain.

Hospitality is a royal virtue and it was held high in honor by the French army in Spain. Besides, Fontenay brought news to men deprived of it, for letters from home were scarce and newspapers still more so. He was listened to like an oracle, although he knew nothing very novel, and he was everybody's friend by the time he had taken his portion of a tough sheep shot in the pasturage bordering the Ebro. His boon companions were under orders to take up arms at three A. M., and, on leaving table, many threw themselves on trusses of straw to sleep.

Fontenay would have done the same but for the pleasure he took in listening to an old captain of the Vistula Legion whose conversation interested him. This Polisher had gone through the 1806 and '7 campaigns and been at several sieges, including the long and murderous one of Dantzic. He spoke from experience about military matters, and his knowledge was not bounded by them. He had seen a great deal but had also read much and remembered well. Without reckoning Polish and Russian, he spoke French most purely, German, Spanish and Latin. Yet this polyglot was neither pedantic nor talkative. He was amiable, although he wore rather a sad air, and Fontenay, who liked to learn, gladly questioned him upon the country, the people and the probable issue of the war.

"Now that we are inside Saragossa, I suppose its capitulation is only a question of days—perhaps, hours, eh, captain?" he inquired.

"My dear comrade," said the Polish officer smiling,

"you do not understand these people. There is a local song which you may have heard sung:

*"'Léal, tozuda y valiente
Es de Zaragozala gente!"*

which signifies the people of Saragossa are loyal, valiant and stubborn."

"I understood it."

"It is true. I forgot you knew the tongue. But I wager that you do not know how an Aragonese is told. A popular saying asserts that when a son is born, its mother strikes him on the head with a plate. If it breaks, the boy is a true Aragonese.

"But if the skull is shattered?" queried Fontenay, bursting with laughter.

"So much the worse for the babe."

"Then they have thick, hard heads, and your conclusion is—"

"That they will be killed to the very last before giving up their city."

"But how can they defend it? it is ours since the assault."

"They will defend it house by house, floor by floor, and when only a stone or two of the foundation wall remains, they will blow themselves up with it. They are commanded by a hero of the antique school—one out of *Plutarch's Lives*."

"What is his name?"

"Palafox. This is like you French—you do not know the name of the enemy you most should dread."

"In the first place I am not a Frenchman of France, and again, the French are satisfied with vanquishing a foe."

"Well retorted, my dear fellow! I believe with you that we shall take him and destroy Saragossa, but at what a price! all the blood shed so far is nothing in comparison with what will flow."

"My dear captain, you are not encouraging," said Fontenay, somewhat irritated by the Pole's somber predictions.

"Heaven forbid I should try to discourage you! I love France; I am ready to give my life for it and for your

Emperor, who will make Poland free, but I know what this war has already cost and I do not cherish any illusions. We will all rest here—but I am resigned—I no longer care for life."

This was spoken in a tone of such sadness that Fontenay was keenly affected.

"Why?" he inquired. "Brave and learned as you are, the future is your own. You will be a general."

"I strongly doubt it, and the marshal's baton would not console me."

Fontenay felt a craving to learn what was his sorrow, but he dared not speak lest he awoke in the veteran's heart some painful grief. But, perceiving black crape worn on the captain's arm, he said with a questioning glance:

"You are in mourning?"

"Yes, for my brother," muttered the Pole.

"A brother, whom you have recently lost?" Fontenay inquired with interest.

"It will be two months to-morrow," came the answer.

"And you have only just received the news of his death! Yes, Poland is so far."

"My brother was not in Poland."

"An older brother than you; no doubt?"

"Ten years my junior. I educated him and loved him like a son. Our mother is still living in our home-country. On leaving for Spain, I thought I might never see her again, but I might hope that her youngest son would remain by her! but he has died before me! and the poor old dame may not know it at present speaking, for it is four hundred leagues from here to Wilna."

"Oh, you belong to Wilna?"

"To the neighborhood, which is why I can tell you that, on the day when your Emperor called the Lithuanians into his service, all marched out with enthusiasm. Very few students remain in the university. I was then serving in the Vistula regiment, as an officer. It is I whom heaven ought to have taken, and not a boy who, compelled by love of his country, enlisted as a soldier."

"What! in the army for Spain?"

"As a private trooper—in our lancers, and in their ranks he fell gloriously, at Somo Sierra."

"I was there. There I saw fire for the first time and I was witness of the heroism of those brave fellows—I charged by their side."

"And had the fortune to return unhurt. But how many remained! the body of my poor Ladislaus was never found—"

"Was Ladislaus his name?" muttered Paul, struck by a memory.

"Ladislaus Zolnycki."

The Christian name had flashed on Fontenay's mind; the family one enlightened it completely. He quickly unbuttoned his coat, from the bosom he took the letters and the portrait which Tournesol had brought off the battle-field on the night of the 30th of November, and he had presented them, without uttering a word to the captain.

"It is my brother's writing," he said, turning pale as he took them into his hand and becoming deeply affected; "this miniature is his betrothed; how does this come to pass?"

"He fell in front of me, and saved my life in dying, for the shots which he received were intended for me."

The captain contemplated these relics of a beloved brother and tears coursed down his rugged cheeks. Almost under as much emotion, Fontenay kept silent not to disturb the sorrow of the old soldier who perhaps had never shed a tear before.

"I thank you, brother!" said Zolnycki, after this silence. "I liked you before—now I would give my life for you."

He did not ask any details upon the day when his brother and the French officer had fought side by side; but the latter related how he had met the brave youth and how he had been killed upon Tournesol's horse when he might have excused himself from charging on account of being unhorsed. The Pole listened without his face betraying his emotion. He had become master of himself again and it was in a steady voice that he said:

"Heaven hath taken him from me. The will of heaven be done! the lives of everyone of us are in its

hand. It may be my turn to-morrow, but so long as I live, rely on me. At present, my dear companion-in-arms, how can I serve you? You have just arrived—"

"As an officer on Marshal Lannes' staff, without knowing him or his officers. What kind of a man is he?"

"Before all and above all, he is brave. I have never seen anybody stand fire like him, and without any display—he has simple bravery, the rarest of all kinds. But he is also a great general, which I cannot say of many others of his rank."

"I am eager to see him, and learn at what he will employ me. We staff-officers are neither flesh nor fowl, and are sent up to table with all sauces. I commenced in the cavalry, but cavalry are not employed in a siege."

"Excuse me. We have a brigade scouting in the Ebro valley to cover our operations, and it often comes to blows with the insurgents—the Thirteenth Cuirassiers and the Fourth Hussars."

The cuirassiers named were the regiment of Commandant Carénac. Fontenay had not forgotten him, but it was most untimely to ask news of the swordsman with whom he had an old score to wipe out.

"Still it is true," proceed Zolnycki, "that the roughest work falls to us marching regiments. So I counsel you to ask to move with us, which will be toward danger—and the marshal will make a good note of that in his mind. He likes officers who seek perilous posts. He ventures his own person and wants others to act in his guise."

"I ask no better fate and wish I could begin to-morrow. But where shall I find him? I could not get near him this evening."

Because he had to take some rest; he is spent with weariness. But I am quite sure that by nine to-morrow morning, he will be on the positions we took the day before yesterday. That's the best place you could choose to make acquaintance. I will conduct you thither, if you like. My company is in the trenches, it happens. The marshal will not refuse you the favor of going on service for one day with us. I warrant that he will be pleased with your asking it."

"Be it so! I will be charmed to perform my novitiate under your direction."

"And I to teach you how to dodge the bullets—an art I learned last year at Dantzig."

"I will try to profit by your lessons, my dear companion—but I wonder how it is Marshal Lannes, incessantly exposed, has not yet been hit."

"More than once it happened, but his bones have a singular property not to splinter when the bullet strikes—they force it round them instead of giving way."

"There is a difference in bullets," remarked Fontenay, shaking his head.

This time he was a true prophet without knowledge of his powers. In less than four months, on the plain of Essling, the illustrious marshal fell with both legs broken by an Austrian cannon-ball. This fatal missile was perhaps not yet cast when the betrothed of Marguerite de Gavre discoursed on the chances in warfare with the Polish officer. Their interview was prolonged, but sleep was necessary to men who had to rise before dawn, and Fontenay did not open his eyes until aroused by his new friend.

It was still dark, and the company took up arms without any call of the clarion.

Tournesol crept out of his burrow, enchanted with the Poles who had admitted him there. He placed himself under his captain's orders with no need to be entreated to come when he heard they were going under fire. He regretted having no musket, but his comrades of the subterranean chamber consoled him by saying he might use that of the first soldier killed.

Fontenay was a little astonished to see Zolnycki array himself in full dress; new epaulets and all his medals and clasps—he wore three on the breast.

"Days of battle are our holidays," he smilingly said, "and I am sure that there will be hot work this time."

They silently made their way toward the Casa Gonzalés, one of the houses occupied by the regiment since the evening after having been repulsed from it on the day of the assault; its connection was just completed by one trench with another for the attack on Saint Monica Convent where the besieged were defending themselves with unparalleled fury.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

The sun had not risen and only a few dropping shots disturbed the stillness of the long January night. On both sides, the aurora was awaited to recommence the massacre.

When it appeared our amateur in sieges could view the position. The works were but slowly driven forward in a soil hardened by winter, under a well-aimed fire, against which the often toppled-over gabions did not sufficiently protect them. The goal was a massive building, whence issued a ceaseless fusillade, and one was exposed to the bullets from the nunnery, loop-holed from foundation to coping-stone and lined with Spaniards who fired without relaxing upon any one approaching the head of the sap.

"They seem to rain from heaven," said Fontenay, without blanching under the plunging fire.

"They come from the roofs," tranquilly responded Zolnycki. "By help of their serge shoes these daring Aragonese circulate upon them with as much ease as cats, and they kill most from overhead. You will see this better presently, when we are well within range."

Suddenly he grasped Fontenay by the arm and pointed out to him near some sand-bags a man in a long-skirted green coat, with no stripes or gilt buttons, and no sword, very busy in studying the town through a telescope.

"You are in luck," remarked the Pole in an undertone. "He has risen early this morning, and you arrive just in time to be introduced. That is Marshal Lannes."

Fontenay at first believed the speaker was hoaxing him. What! this citizen whom he would have taken for an army contractor, was the Emperor Napoleon's illus

trious lieutenant, the commander at the siege, the famous Marshal Lannes, Duke of Montebello!

Smiling at his young comrade's amazement, Zolnycki pursued:

"I told you he had genuine courage. Now you see the proof. There he stands under shot and shell as quietly as in a room. And the bullets fairly shower down—just hear their music!"

"I have heard it before," returned Fontenay. "Who is the officer standing by the marshal's side?"

"That is General Lacoste, commanding in chief the engineers. He is not afraid, either. Now, my dear friend, snatch your chance! Go up gently, place yourself behind them and when the marshal makes up his mind to retire, accost him. I'll answer for your being well received."

"I am going."

"Mind, it is not very healthy there!"

A cannon-ball had struck the rampart of gabions and tossed a sand-bag up in the air.

"Pooh! the marshal is hale enough," returned the young captain, walking on without hurrying.

"Three paces behind Lannes he stopped to wait; he had not been heard coming. The Polander had spoken the truth; it was not a healthy spot. The fusillade redoubled in violence and the bullets from the nunnery sent up little clouds of dust where they skipped on the ground all around him. Evidently the Spaniards had noticed the three men, isolated and unshielded, in the midst of the too-open trench; they aimed at them and it was a miracle none yet were hit.

Paul thought of Marguerite, but time hung heavy for once.

At length the marshal shut up his telescope and Fontenay heard him calmly say to General Lacoste:

"I believe they have seen us. Let us get out of it."

He turned his back as on a troublesome chatterer. This was the moment Fontenay was waiting for, with his hand up to his schako and his heels on the same line. He recognized the marshal's handsome martial countenance from having once seen it at a reception in the Tuileries. Surprised to see an officer there whom he did

not know, the marshal sternly asked him who he was and what he wanted.

Fontenay named himself, and the cloudy brow lightened up.

"You are sent to me and recommended by the Emperor," he said; "I will attend to you, and you shall not lack occasions to distinguish yourself. But what are you doing in the trenches? This is no place for you who are not on duty."

"I knew that I should find you here, marshal, and I was in haste to present myself."

"You do not fear projectiles by what I can see?"

"I have never witnessed a siege and I try to instruct myself in all the branches of the military art."

"You will be in a good school here and I do not wish to cut short your first lesson in the attack of strongholds. You may stay here to-day, and when the company which you have followed out is relieved from guard, come for my orders at head-quarters."

A cannon-ball whizzed over the speaker's head, and he added merrily: "Do not get killed—it would be a pity."

He passed on with General Lacoste, who was to die, shot mortally, three days subsequently. The soldiers cheered him as good judges of fearlessness. The valiant leader testified by a friendly wave of the hand that he was not insensible to their prolonged hurrahs.

"Well," said Zolnycki to his new comrade, "I gave you good advice, and it seems to me that you have done well in following it."

"I am only too happy, dear friend!" exclaimed Fontenay, "the marshal allows me to stay with you until evening."

"That's right. You will not lose your time, for I foresee that it will be a rough day. Our miners are hard at work below and they will need only a few hours to tunnel beneath the large building you perceive yonder at the back. It is a hospital which the Spanish fortified so that we have not been able to drive them out. I hope this afternoon you will see it blown up; but that will not finish it. These obstinate Aragonese cling to the ruins, and they will fire on us as long as one stone sticks on

another. I will show you how our men will carry it with the bayonet, and how our sappers clear the way."

"I am burning to be in it all."

"So am I, but the time has not come. Meanwhile come with me to the gabion wall, here I will teach you to 'spoil the shot.' That is very important."

"Spoil a shot?" repeated Fontenay, not yet familiarized with the slang of the military engineers.

"Yes; which means to forestall the enemy's fire by firing upon him. The talent lies in giving without receiving, as the fencing-master says to M. Jourdain in Molière's '*Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.' Our soldiers are already at the work. See them over there, kneeling behind the barricade, gently moving the sand-bag, and forming a loop-hole between the two earth-baskets in which to rest the musket barrel. But one must fire quick, without getting shot, which is humiliating."

"I believe my orderly is taking a lesson."

It was true. Instructed by a Polish sergeant who had formed a liking for him, and had lent his gun, Tournesol had knelt down and was attentively aiming through an interstice at a Spaniard, ambushed behind a chimney on the convent roof. The shot went off and the Spaniard tumbled down on the ground.

"Bravo!" shouted Zolnycki. "Your dragoon is very skillful and never learnt marksmanship in his regiment. Let us watch him at work. Stop, there's a corporal of the Fourteenth Foot who has let himself be 'winged.' That comes from uncovering himself. Your soldiers are as bold as mine, but they never went out wild-fowling like my fellows, who learned the art in their marshy country, in knocking over the wild geese. I must put this in order by having the little fellows of the Fourteenth taught the tricks of the trade."

Some fifty of these French had come at the same time as the Vistula Legion company, and they were merrily shooting away. A few only had sat down to repose before relieving the ones engaged.

The trench was badly enough sheltered. To go as far as the gabions in line, a certain space had to be passed without cover unless one stooped, and on the previous afternoon fatality had befallen the imprudent men who

had through ignorance or bravado neglected to take that undignified precaution.

"Bend down, comrade, when you go by there," said Zolnycki. "You see that the men of the Fourteenth who are waiting their turn take care in sitting down, to set their backs against the parapet. They do not show even the tops of their caps to the maddened fellows who pepper us."

"I shall do what you say, but it is very disagreeable to go down almost on all fours to avoid a bullet. It looks as if one feared them."

"My dear friend, an officer has no right to expose his life uselessly. If the marshal were here he would hold the same language."

"Enough! since it is right, I will stoop to stooping," sighed Fontenay, with a faint smile.

He was tall, and to "dodge the bullets," as Zolnycki said, he had almost to bend double, much against his taste, for, in spite of his mentor's wise observations, he chafed at appearing in a ridiculous attitude. His elbows touched his knees and he stretched out his neck like the tortoise's in its race.

"Well done!" ejaculated Zolnycki, "you are clear through it, and I am coming in the same fashion."

He was bending down to start when a soldier who, himself, for the greater security had lain at full length, said aloud:

"Hallo, here's the officers showing the white feather too!"

He was the offspring of the gutters of Paris, for he had the vulgar accent strongly pronounced. Evil to him who insults his superiors, for the Polish captain, who was of herculean strength, grasped him by the collar, dragged him upright and, rising to his own full height, strode forward with him held at arm's length. Twenty gunshots cracked from the Saint Monica's windows and rooftops. The soldier was riddled, but his body preserved the officer who was not once struck; sometimes there are intelligent bullets.

Zolnycki cast down the foul-mouthed fellow, who was a sheer corpse, for he had been killed instantly.

Deeply impressed, Fontenay looked to see if his com-

panions would not revenge him by firing on the officer who had him punished by the Spaniards; but Fontenay did not yet understand soldiers.

"Served him right!" they shouted in unison, rising as though electrified by this act of daring, and running over to the gabions.

Fontenay and the Pole reached them beforehand, where they found Tournesol busily engaged in putting into practice the lessons of the old Polish sergeant who befriended him. This Jack-of-all-trades of Gascon was so gifted that he invented a decoy unknown to his professor, but familiar to the West Indian, who had seen some fighting in the canebrakes. Jean put his fatigue-cap on the point of his bayonet and showed it above the bags of earth to the hostile sharp-shooters; they tattered it with bullets while, six paces apart, the sergeant aimed at his ease through an aperture and brought down one at each shot of those uncovering themselves.

"Your Frenchmen are astonishingly quick," observed Zolnycki, "here's one who has never served save in the heavy-horse troops—perhaps never handled a musket—and yet he uses it as though he had done nothing but fine shooting all his life. I grant that they are not good at discipline," smilingly concluded the captain.

"They require officers of your stamp," replied Fontenay. "You energetically set the tune and see, they run the gauntlet like yours without thinking at all of 'dodging'."

"I regret the poor lad was slain—but examples are needed."

"Very luckily you were not touched, and the fault is mine that you were exposed to show that you had no fear. I ought to have walked over without cowering."

"You would have done very wrong, my dear comrade. Bravery has nothing in common with bravado. You French are not satisfied with being courageous—you must have vain-glory to boot. I wish to correct you of the defect."

"I'll try to correct myself. But it strikes me, my dear Zolnycki, that you might have crossed yonder without drawing yourself up to your full height—"

"I might have stooped, it is true; but that was an

exceptional case. It was necessary to prove to the men that we officers do not care for our lives and all men are equal under fire. Call your orderly for me to compliment him; he fights like a lion."

Fontenay had no need to call Tournesol. He had seen the two captains and he ceased shooting to come over to them, saying:

"That's my third Spaniard settled and I have not done with them yet."

"You seem to like it," said Fontenay.

"Well, captain, it is livelier than in the cavalry. I wish I were in a marching regiment."

"You may keep at it all day if you like. The marshal has authorized me to stay in the trenches until dark."

"Oh, Marshal Lannes! He is a fearless one, and we come from the same part; another Gascon!"

"Yes, daring runs in your blood. But do not be overbold, and try to come out unhurt. I need you."

"There is no danger of their catching me napping, captain. I am not wearing my breastplate, so I keep a sharper lookout. When you feel like breaking your fast—mind! I have some army bread in my pocket and brandy in my canteen."

Tournesol carried in a sling this celebrated flask, to which the creole had recourse on exceptional occasions, and he was toying affectionately with it when a Spanish bullet cut a piece out of it without touching the bearer. He called out as he presented it to his officer:

"Drink quick, captain, it's leaking!"

"I am not thirsty. Empty it yourself!"

Without further entreaty, the orderly drained it through the bullet hole to the last drop, whereupon he ran to the barricade, growling:

"Oh, the ruffians! they shall pay for the breakage!"

The grave Zolnycki could not help laughing, but Fontenay laughed more loudly; he had not lost a brother and everything amused him in spite of danger.

"That is a warning by which we must profit," remarked the Polander. "Our regular place is not here. Come with me."

He drew his young friend against a moderately high earthwork to protect him from the flank fire of Saint

Monica's. The deep voice of the cannon overpowered the crackling of the musketry, for the French batteries were firing *salvos* and the besieged replied all along the line. No one would have suspected the French had become masters of part of the town and the most hopeful began to believe that Saragossa would still hold out. Zolnycki was among those who feared that the inevitable success would be delayed and dearly purchased. As Fontenay asked him if the day would pass in firing on the place, he said, shaking his head:

'It is probable that we will assault the large hospital before long. I am waiting for the order. If you are bent upon learning street warfare you will be satisfied. What you see here is nothing to it. In this trench we fight in the open air and daylight. There it will be in fire and smoke. The shooting will go on in the cellars and through the floors, without an enemy being seen. I say nothing of the mines bursting at most unexpected moments. But after all, it's our trade—and some get through it, in token of which here I stand."

"I hope we shall both get through. Besides, it seems to me that the hospital's firing has become less hot these few instants."

"True! Our heavy pieces have pounded at it since morning; there are gaps knocked in it, and soon it will be untenable. That will be the moment for our rush."

"How shall we learn?"

"The marshal, at his post, sees what is going on. When he thinks it time he will send us an aid-de-camp—and it is possible he will not keep us long waiting. Mark! they are not firing now—perhaps they are evacuating the hospital."

"Not the convent, though, for the bullets still rain in from that quarter. But see the officer coming toward us—he may bring the order to move."

"I do not think so, as I have never seen him on the marshal's staff. It is a cuirassier officer. Why the deuce is he not with his regiment? Your orderly belongs to the same branch of the service, but wears neither helm nor cuirass, while this one is in full array. What the mischief is he looking for in the trenches?"

"He is looking for you. He questions a soldier of the

Fourteenth, who points you out and he comes at a quick pace."

"It is so! I am curious to see if he will stoop to pass the dangerous place—he will act properly for his stature makes him a tall target—he is over six feet high."

The officer was a brave one, for he strode along without lowering his crest; and Tournesol, who was looking at him while loading his musket, called out:

"Why, here's my old commander!"

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNEXAMPLED DUEL.

Fontenay also looked, and was not a little surprised to recognize Carénac, not seen since their interrupted duel in Malmaison gardens. The meeting was inopportune, but there was no means of avoiding it, and the younger officer put a good face on the matter. The other paid no heed to him, however, but addressed Zolnycki in these terms:

"Captain, the marshal sends me, although I am not one of his staff. I had brought a letter from my colonel to him and having no other officer at hand—his aids being all away with orders—he charged me to command you immediately to carry the battery in front of you. The Spaniards are quitting it. Occupy it and intrench yourself. If the enemy tries to dislodge you, hold out until relieved. The marshal attaches much value to the holding of this position. Where," concluded Carénac abruptly, "where are your officers?"

"My lieutenant and his sub, were wounded yesterday. I have nobody by me but Captain Fontenay, whom you see."

Carénac turned, recognized his once adversary, and said in a surly tone:

"What are you doing here, sir? I thought you were with the Emperor?"

"I was there," returned the junior life-guardsman, without being disconcerted. "I am now attached to the staff of the marshal, Duke of Montebello."

"And captain already? two steps in two months!"

"I hope I have honestly won them."

"I regret you have not won still another. Were you a squadron-commander we might settle our old quarrel."

"I am at your call, commandant, as soon as I wear the full epaulet."

"It may be long a-coming."

"I mean to try not to keep you waiting, being as eager as you to finish. But, now I think of it—there may be a way to abridge the delay—"

"Yes, if I would stand up against you at once. But I have no desire to be 'broken' in my grade for fighting a duel with my inferior officer."

"There are other ways of fighting than with sword or pistol—and not contrary to discipline."

"With the knife, in the Spanish mode," said Carénac, ironically.

"No, commandant, let the cannon decide!"

"Captain, I fear that you are jesting with me!" roared Carénac, red with ire.

"Heaven forbid, commandant!" returned Fontenay with the utmost politeness. "I propose the cannon to settle it—not as you understood me, however."

"A truce to ribaldry! you will go under arrest for a week to teach you to respect your superior officers, and I will inform the marshal of the motives for the punishment I impose upon you."

"You are acting in your right, commandant, and I do not venture to remonstrate. I shall go under arrest on leaving guard in the trenches; but, until evening, we have time to settle our quarrel by the means I proposed."

"Again! you go too far!"

Zolnycki could not understand anything of the young American's persistency and shook his head at him, which sign he feigned not to see. The stupefied Tournesol stared with widely distended eyes. He was ignorant of his officer's having any dispute with Carénac and could not recover from the amaze at hearing him banter the commandant. The wrangle would have been comic if not occurring under the brisk fire of the Spanish in the nunnery casements. One of their rear batteries, on the left, was just opening fire and its balls skimmed the parapet crest at every instant, while the bullets whistled in between. The time and the place were badly chosen to discuss the arrangements for a single combat.

"Commandant," proceeded Fontenay without agitation,

"allow me kindly to explain. Believe me that I do not propose our using great guns on one another. My meaning is that we should make use of those of the besieged to end our difference. We need but climb upon the parapet and stand there until one of us is carried away by a Spanish cannon-ball. The report will be, 'killed by the enemy's fire!' and it will be truth."

"The rogue is incorrigible!" muttered Zolnycki in consternation.

"Do you imagine," said Carénac, "that I am going to risk being cut in twain, to be agreeable to you?"

"Let me point out to you, commandant, that I shall be as much in risk as yourself, and, if I am struck down, you will be rid of me without any of the trouble of sending me into the oldest of worlds; but you are not obliged to accept my suggestion; I grant that it is not attractive!"

These final words uttered in a saucy tone stung Carénac to the quick; he had not a subtle wit, but he clearly comprehended that his courage was held in doubt.

"You are mad, sir," he said, "and I should be worse to consent to what you ask. But I, sir, propose this. To reach the building to be captured, there are three hundred paces to cover under fire. When the signal to attack is given, I ought to return to the marshal. But, no—I will march them with you, side by side. We shall see then which will be killed."

"Commandant, your idea is much better than mine," Fontenay hastened to respond; "I accept it heartily. Now, I am ready to go."

"When our artillery ceases firing. That is the marshal's order. Captain," he went on, to Zolnycki, "collect your men. Leave half a company to guard the trench and to keep up the fire on the Saint Monica's Spaniards. Take command of the others, to charge as soon as our gun-fire slackens. I will precede you with this gentleman."

Zolnycki himself thought that this assault was as brainless as the two Frenchmen's staking their lives upon vanity, but he would not disobey a superior officer on any account, and he gave out his orders in consequence. The

men of his legion and of the Fourth Foot ranked themselves against the parapet, ready to start at word of command. Burning to be of the merry party, Tournesol slipped in among the Poles.

"Well, captain, are you contented?" questioned Carénac of his junior. You see I act with willingness. It will probably be the first time that they have seen a heavy cavalry officer mount in the assault in boots and spurs. But, come to think of it, we are not on an equality as I wear helmet and armor—shall I remove them?"

"Quite superfluous, commandant. Your breast-plate will not keep out cannon-balls and it will prevent you moving as fleetly as I. Hence, the disadvantage will rest with you—but, to compensate you, I will march on your left side since the missiles come from that direction. At Malmaison, I left you the choice of weapons, here I claim the choice of ground—in your favor!"

"As you please. The place matters not—it is an affair of chance. Are you ready?"

"Entirely."

"And you, captain?"

"I am awaiting your orders, commandant. Our pieces are hushed—that's the cue, and I—"

"Forward—march! the Fourteenth Voltigeurs! Forward, the Polish legion!" shouted Carénac, striding over the parapet at the same time as Fontenay.

The soldiers did the same upon Zolnycki's repeating voice, in a movement executed with extraordinary rapidity and harmony. They instinctively comprehended that it was an occasion to march at will. In a close body they would offer the enemy a better mark.

The strange duel commenced as the two adversaries raced on side by side, with elbows touching. Zolnycki followed them closely.

This sortie was saluted by a hail of projectiles; the cannon-balls whirred and the bullets buzzed about the ears like bees; and more than one lodged. But the company, running at full speed, gained ground, while Carénac, overweighted by his steel shell lost to Fontenay whose young legs carried him on like a deer's. He had the advance and would have outstripped him but for a singular sound making him turn his head.

A cannon-ball had furrowed up the earth so near the commandant as to knock him down and bury him without grazing him.

Fontenay was not bound to help him. Such an act was not laid down in the arrangements for the duel. But still he retraced his steps, and aided him to rise, saying:

"Had I disarmed you on the ground I should have let you pick up your sword. This is the same case. Only allow me not to delay for you. Try to overtake me."

He resumed his career. The others were almost at the goal and the threatened building was no longer defended. Doors and blinds had been destroyed. Not a shot flashed from the yawning orifices. They were soon clambered through, and Carénac entered almost at the same time as the junior captain. Neither had been injured; it was a miracle.

"Do you consider honor is satisfied?" inquired the West Indian of the Frenchman, who appeared surprised at his escape, but who snarled between his teeth:

"All is not over. We are here—but how shall we get out of it?"

The soldiers were still rushing onward when a whirlwind of smoke made them recede. Before abandoning the hospital, the Spanish had fired it, and it burned from top to foundation. They groped in the shades without knowing where they were. An abominable reek of roasting flesh stifled those attempting to push farther. The dead and the wounded, no less, whom the besieged had no time to remove, were in danger of being consumed in beds or on the floor. It was enough to make the most intrepid recoil, and Fontenay, who had not lost his coolness, guessed that the Spanish had abandoned this stronghold merely to entice the assailants into this gulf without issue.

Disorder was at its height.

Zolnycki still was in command, but his voice was no longer obeyed, smothered as it was by the uproar of the renewed cannonading.

Fontenay had forgotten Carénac; all he thought of was clearing a passage for pushing on by corridors where nothing could be seen; he did not doubt he would

simply walk into the principal fire of the conflagration. By touching the walls, he found a window which retained its shutters; he broke them with a blow of his fist and obtained a little air and light. It opened on an inner-court, in front of a wing in flames. Here he could breathe, and he rushed down into it with the men following. They believed themselves saved.

All of a sudden their ears were split by a sound which they had learnt to know since they beleaguered Saragossa—a shrill hissing, followed almost instantly by a dreadful roar—the fizz of a slow match and the thunder of a bursting mine.

The inflamed wing collapsed at the shock without being blown up; the mine had not been overloaded; they were soon to see the reason. But Fontenay and his followers shrank back, blinded by dust and smoke, though very happy at not being crushed.

Dread silence followed this explosion. The soldiers sought to identify one another after the terrible shock. One could not see ten paces, and it was impossible to advance in the murkiness.

It cleared up only too soon.

The wind drove away the dusty clouds whirling in the yard. Then, as at a theatre, a transformation scene was seen. The building which had closed in the yard and was brought down flat, unmasked a battery of three guns leveled at fifty paces on the storming party.

This was the surprise reserved by the Spanish.

Surrounded by numerous gunners this battery was backed by a large house having its roofs and windows peopled by insurgents ready to shoot at the assaulters when they came within range.

"The scoundrels! They have us in a tight corner," said a voice in Fontenay's ear which he recognized as Carénac's.

"Huzza, commandant, we are neither of us dead. Is our duel still on the cards?"

"A pretty time to talk of duelling! We are to be cut to shreds!"

"Then we cannot fight again—what a pity! but—"

The cannon cut short his speech. The three pieces were fired at once, throwing canisters of grape-shot, of

which the effect would have been more murderous at three hundred paces; at short range the canisters did not scatter but went as a ball. A few men fell, but the court-yard was vacated in a twinkling by the men running away helter-skelter. The soldiers crammed themselves in the lobby, where they were somewhat under shelter. From this to abandoning the captured building was but a step.

Fontenay had not fled. He called back the men who would not hearken to him, and was saying to himself: "If but one is to make a stand it shall be I!" when the Polish captain, who had not fled any more than he, gently nudged him and said, without raising his voice:

"The place is not tenable, and it is useless to get killed; but go on ahead, my dear comrade. In these cases, the officer highest in rank must leave the last. You are a captain like me, but I am senior."

He spoke with as much calmness as if he were debating about precedence at a drawing-room door-way.

"Help!" cried out a man, falling wounded in the court-yard.

Fontenay turned and saw it was the commandant stretched on the pavement. He did not hesitate even a second to retrace his steps to help to raise him. It was marching to certain death, as the sharp-shooters in the windows were showering bullets like a fall of hail around the unfortunate Carénac, unable to move. Like the others Tournesol had recoiled, but he was the hindmost, and seeing his officer return on the road he did the same without listening to Zolnycki's reiterated calls.

Zolnycki was performing his duty as leader, as in being his own rear-guard, in the same manner as a sea-captain keeping to his wrecked ship the last and preventing several sailors risking their lives to attempt the saving of one.

He had tried to retain Fontenay while admiring his bravery, with good reason, for the young captain risked his life to succor a man whom he could not hold in warm affection.

The two intrepid spirits, captain and trooper, arrived together near Carénac who said:

"My foot's broken! the Spanish have finished me. Try to rally those cowards who run like a flock of sheep."

"Commandant," said Fontenay, "I helped you up once before from under the cannon-balls; I will do it again under the grape-shot. Give me your hand—the other too, my orderly. Good! Now make an effort! right, again! You are up! Stand between us, rest upon us and limp along."

All these movements were executed by the unfortunate Carénac, though not without pain, and, thanks to the generous rescuers, he was brought under an infernal fire into the entrance of the corridor, where Zolnycki received them with open arms.

Momentarily, they were in safety under this arched way, where the fugitives began to recover from a rather excusable weakness. The panic had ended, but the attack could not be renewed before reinforcements arrived; and, more than all, before the French siege artillery dismounted the three field-pieces, still sweeping the yard.

Zolnycki did not doubt that the marshal, from the battery where he stood, had seen all that happened and would immediately give orders for the Polish to be supported lest they were cut off from the trenches. They would have to defend themselves while awaiting the supports, in case the Spanish attempted a return on the offensive, and Zolnycki made his arrangements like a soldier knowing his craft.

The conflagration diminished in violence from want of material, the fire having consumed all that was combustible in the wing where the grape-shot had slain some soldiers; though the smoke was still thick, they could breathe.

Zolnycki ranked his men to face all ways, while showing them as little as possible.

One hall, less damaged than the others, was set aside for the wounded, and those who could move dragged themselves into it; the others were carried. Carénac was one of the foremost, supported on both sides, and hobbling without losing any of his energy. He planted himself against the wall, holding one foot up, while the Poles brought in the fragments of bedding undevoured

by the flames. Zolnycki soon came to inquire on the state of the wounded captain, who answered without preface:

"Captain, you arrive timely. I do not know whether my charger will follow me riderless to the grave or not, for I have determined not to let my leg be amputated, and if gangrene sets in I shall never recover. I have more than repaid the Spanish—but I do not want to pass away without repairing my wrongs toward Captain Fontenay."

"You owe me no reparation, commandant," Paul said quickly. "The regret is mine for proposing that absurd duel."

"Less absurd than the cause of our quarrel. Without motive I insulted you at la Malmaison and you were a hundred times right in resenting the insult. I conducted myself like a blackguard, and the Empress would have treated me as I deserved if she had ordered me out of the palace. I owed you apologies—a foolish self-conceit restrained me—it is still time and I offer you them in presence of a brave officer who now knows us both, though he must awhile ago have taken us for lunatics. Give me your hand, captain, for me to clasp it!"

Fontenay did not require twice telling. He was much agitated, though he had not winced under a terrible fire, and Zolnycki was not much less affected.

"If I escape," resumed Carénac, "I shall wish only one thing—the chance to lift you out of a difficulty at any cost to myself. Even then I could not cry quits with you."

Fontenay was going to expostulate when a sergeant of the Fourteenth burst in like a shell to announce that the Spaniards were retiring. Zolnycki's conjecture was verified. By the marshal's order, three of the heavy French batteries had concentrated their fire upon the house, unscreened by the mine explosion. Two of the Spanish pieces were knocked over and one of the powder-cases blown up. The walls crumbled down and the gunners fled at top of their speed. At the same instant bugles were heard sounding the charge, and up ran two battalions of reinforcements. Zolnycki had not waited for them to gather his men, head them and rush to the assault.

Fontenay did not resist the general contagion. It cost him a pang to quit his reconciled adversary, but the latter urged him to go, and Tournesol offered to remain beside the wounded man, who was also his regimental captain.

The day terminated better than it had commenced. Without too much loss, three houses rather tamely defended were captured.

They almost reached the *Fosso*, Saragossa's central thoroughfare, where they were brought to a standstill before the university, an enormous structure, fortified like a citadel.

This was sufficient for a novice at siege-work and Fontenay, who had borne himself like a veteran, might return to head-quarters without fear of the marshal's badly greeting him.

In the evening Tournesol informed him that the commandant was in the ambulance and would not die of his wound.

Fontenay counted now a friend the more in Carénac; but he still had a foe more dangerous in himself alone than all the *guerilleros* of Spain—he had not ended his strife with the unattainable Don Blas de Montalvan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE YOUNG WIDOW.

In time all things come to an end in this world—even sieges.

After three months' investment and fifty-two days of approaches by open trenches, Saragossa capitulated perforce on the 2nd of February, 1809. Nothing but ensanguined ruins remained of the heroic city.

The day of the 18th had been decisive. A mine loaded with fifteen hundred pounds of powder had blown up half the central street, El Cosse, where resistance was concentrated, driven back from house to house to the heart of the demolished town. There was some fighting on the following morning, but a Spanish flag-of-truce had appeared in the evening before the vanquisher, and after twenty-four hours' discussion his hard terms were accepted by the last defenders.

Since his essay in the trenches in front of the hospital, Paul Fontenay had not spared himself. Marshal Lannes had taken a friendly liking to him, and as a unique favor, the young captain had asked leave to serve as a volunteer in the Vistula Legion, in the company of Zolnycki under whom he had served his apprenticeship. He had obtained this favor, and while still numbered among the staff-officers he had fought every day in the Polish ranks, never spared, as it was charged with the most perilous tasks.

Happier than Commandant Carénac, the West Indian had not received even a scratch.

The brave Carénac had come out of danger but had to hobble on crutches. What he foresaw had happened. The surgeons declared amputation of his foot to be indispensable, but he had energetically refused to submit,

when the doctor undertook to perform an operation on him in spite of his will, he clapped a horse-pistol in their faces and threatened to blow out their brains if they dared to touch him. There are reasons to believe that Tournesol had supplied him with the same. The surgeons retired, predicting a speedy decease, and three weeks subsequently he entered into convalescence.

Fontenay went three times to see him in the Thirteenth Cuirassiers' ambulance on the Ebro's bank, the two adversaries who had tried to slay each other in Malmaison park having become the best friends in the world.

Tournesol had not quitted his captain and was the Polanders' darling, diverting himself exceedingly, though he did not learn their language.

One cloud always marred Paul's existence—the absence of Paris news. Prégny had not written to him, and the creole could not account for the too prolonged silence.

Fortunately he had no time to mope between two storming-parties; it was a distraction to stake his life every day.

But the French held the city and the moment neared to take some course, for Marshal Lannes was not to remain in Spain.

Paul imparted his perplexity to Zolnycki, become his bosom friend, who counseled him to request leave to follow the marshal when recalled by the Emperor. Fontenay was almost resolved to act on this advice, wholly disinterested from Zolnycki's preferring not to part from his new brother-in-arms.

The hour had come, and from dawn on the 21st of February, the army was ready to view the procession of the vanquished, none overeager to give up their stations as their sentries lifted their muskets to fire on the French when too nearly approaching them. The delay had been employed at the camp for brushing up to appear in parade dress. The cloaks, singed by powder and rent by bullets, were carefully rolled up in knapsacks, and the cleaned guns glittered in the sunshine.

The army that had been fighting for more than sixty days with vehemence might have creditably figured in a holiday parade. For one, Paul would have preferred

to pass beneath the windows of the Tuileries palace clothed in his uniform worn with ten battles, than see the Saragossa garrison lay down their arms. But he had no choice and could only hope soon to be compensated at Paris.

The event was to take place at the *Puerta del Portillo*, to reach which, ground cut up by canals had to be crossed, and this delayed the march. It was near noon when the Vistula Legion joined the other bodies in battle-array to be reviewed by the marshal.

They were going to behold those famous defenders of Saragossa and the heroic citizens who had lived for forty days under a rain of bombshells without altering their habits. At the height of the bombardment, they still held *tertullias*, evening parties, where they played cards and drank chocolate. When the Leaning Tower bell rang a fire alarm, the players would pause to lay down their cards for an instant and "cross" themselves—and on would go the game.

At midday, Lannes, surrounded by a numerous staff, passed before the ranks, grave and silent as usual, and saluted the colors dropped as he came by. He opened his lips only to bid several colonels rectify the line of their troops.

Tournesol, placed as fugleman of the Zolnycki company, expected better things of his illustrious countryman. Gascons are not ordinarily misers in speech, and had Fontenay's orderly been in the general's stead, he would not have missed so fine an opportunity for a harangue. But Paul admired the lofty and manly bearing of the victor who triumphed modestly and with dignity.

Lannes went up to the gates and the exodus began.

At first appeared the boys under eighteen, almost children, wearing gray cloaks and red cockades. They ranked themselves opposite the victorious army on the opposite side of the road.

Next came a mob of people of all ages and conditions—some in uniform, but nearly all like rustics; they came from all parts of Spain. What astonished Fontenay above all was to see officers mounted on mules or even donkeys; they were distinguishable only by their cocked hats.

The young and somewhat fastidious captain had entertained quite another idea of the heroes who had so long held the French army in check. A few instants' reflection, however, made him understand that they believed themselves doing a very plain duty in defending their country against the foreigner, and when overcome they resigned themselves to their destiny with that fatalism they inherit from the Moors. They smoked and they chattered tranquilly among themselves as if ignorant of their going away prisoners into France far from the land so valiantly defended.

At first inclined to laugh at the heterogeneous crowd, Fontenay admired them with all his heart.

The French soldiers, less refined in sentiment, did not shrink from jeering at their brave foemen. Tournesol ventured to say aloud that such ragamuffins should not be treated with so much ceremony—a remark that drew his captain's severe admonishment upon him. But he changed his note when the troops received the order to render military honors to General Palafox, the illustrious head of the defense. He had been found dying and was carried on a litter. One of Marshal Lannes' aids-de-camp, hat in hand, superintended the transfer of the glory-covered, vanquished Spaniard to the padded coach for conveyance into France, while the drums beat a loud roll.

At this moment, Fontenay thought no further of the miseries of the siege. Glory seemed to blot out all else, and war became a noble thing when nobly done. Still he was pained to see that the Spanish hardly glanced at the undaunted patriot who had commanded them. The contrast was striking between this indifference and the vanquishers' respectful bearing, and the young officer understood that the masses are almost always unjust and that only a soldier knows how to honor misfortune.

Immediately after the marching-out, which took time, the French entered the conquered town and the officers were authorized to visit it.

Fontenay, we may readily believe, was one of the first to use this permission. He wished to rove through Saragossa before reporting to the marshal who had told him to come for orders about three o'clock. He hastened

to take this mournful stroll, and Zolnycki allowed Tournesol to accompany him by an exception, as private soldiers were confined to barracks till further orders. It would have pained Fontenay to be separated from his orderly whose qualities he appreciated better and better; they had become so friendly that he treated him almost on equality.

He had not gone so far as to confer with him about Mlle. de Gavre, his anxiety and his hopes; but he would have confided in him sooner than in his brother-officers of the staff whose minds were not turned toward sentimentality; he had more than once been on the point of speaking of the idol, urged by the need felt by all lovers.

On this day, particularly, the American was disposed to disclose his heart to a friend.

The siege was finished; he had bravely done his duty and his military destiny would be defined as everybody knew that Marshal Lannes would not be slow in departing from Spain. Would he leave in it his young officer of whom he knew little from Fontenay having fought in the ranks of the Legion instead of being on his staff? or would he ask him to come into Germany whither he would be called to command a corps of the *Grande Armée*?

In the latter case, Fontenay would be free to accept or decline, and he wavered still.

The only confidant of his passion for Marguerite de Gavre, George de Prégny, was in Paris, and he could the less consult him by correspondence as the post did not travel in the insurgent provinces, and the military couriers passed with the utmost difficulty.

Fontenay had Zolnycki beside him, granted—one who deserved his whole confidence, but the grave Polander, saddened by the death of his brother, would doubtlessly have coolly received his new comrade's loving confidence, and the latter felt scruples about disturbing his grief.

But while Marguerite's betrothed was no longer repugnant toward speaking of the lady to the faithful squire who had given so many proofs of devotedness, he was in no haste to speak while wandering with him over the ruins

of Saragossa; he only thought of gratifying his curiosity.

Having seen the vanquished combatants, he was eager to study what was left of the crushed city and chiefly the population so heroically enduring the sufferings of the siege.

The picture surpassed in horror all he had dreamt of. No streets were left in the parts first occupied by the French and given up by the inhabitants. The only means of movement were through the houses by breaches in the walls opened by the cannon, and guides and placards were placed to indicate the way.

In the center, where resistance had been prolonged to the ultimate day, it was more awful still.

Around the Cosso, blown up by the mine, the streets were mounds of ruins and a charnel-field. Residents of the bombarded wards had taken refuge here, and underneath the Toledo street arcades, lay a conglomeration of children, women, old men, dying ones, dead, and broken furniture. In the middle of the roadway stripped corpses were piled on one another, and here and there fires burned of splinters on which unfortunate beings tried to cook food.

Fontenay picked his way with an aching heart, and Tournesol held his tongue, contrary to his custom; this mournful sight had frozen his Gascon garrulity.

Haggard and bony, the children sprawled on the pavement. The men, standing along the dilapidated walls, averted their heads not to see the two Frenchmen pass whom they grieved at not daring to stab.

Officer and soldier, the pair finally gained the plaza, on going down toward the river Ebro, where towers the famous cathedral of the *Virgen del Pilar*. This open space was encumbered by praying women, and coffins piled on one another. Since three days, being under the besiegers' fire, no burials had taken place. The accumulated remains awaited their turn to be blessed by the priests officiating at every altar in the church without power to cope with the demand.

One of the biers was open and showed the face of an old officer in Spanish uniform sleeping his last sleep, having fallen for his country in the breach and sword in hand.

A woman on her knees was praying near it; perhaps his daughter. Being placed behind her, Fontenay did not see her countenance but her figure denoted she was young, and he began thinking of Mlle. de Gavre; the war had made her an orphan only three years previously without the solace of weeping over her father's remains, struck down on the icy field of Austerlitz far from her. The captain paused to contemplate the mourner and noticed her frequent lifting of her head to peer with anxiety into the cathedral's gaping portals.

He divined that she was anxious about the non-appearance of the priest to say the final prayers, and the memory of his betrothed inspired him with the idea of going to fetch him.

He made the sign for Tournesol to remain where he was, while he entered the sacred building with much difficulty, as he was obliged to thread his way through a throng of women in mourning, among whom were mingled a few French soldiers.

The pavement of the capacious nave disappeared under the prostrated black forms. Their sobs responded to the religious psalms arising from the principal altar, and the fumes of the incense, burned for the Spanish dead, slowly stole up into the arches and issued by the French cannon-ball holes.

Although not as religious as Marguerite would wish, being of exemplary piety herself, Paul was touched by this incident. In the midst of his involuntary prayers for his betrothed, his fallen comrades, those surviving, the Empress Josephine his benefactress, and even for Napoleon, though he had parted the lovers in summoning him to Spain, an aged priest with white hair came up. Fontenay, not forgetting the kneeling lady without, bowed profoundly and following him toward the egress, said to him in a low voice:

"Father, out there, one of your fellow-country-women, mourning over the bier of an officer, waits for your prayers."

Surprised to hear a stranger speak such pure Castilian, the priest eyed him with an astonished air before replying:

"I knew it, senor, and I was going thither."

No doubt he remembered the dead captain as one of the defenders of Saragossa.

Fontenay watched him and saw him touch the weeping lady on the shoulder; she rose and began to speak to him with singular vivacity. He thought she reproached him for his tardiness and he concluded she was of high rank by the almost respectful attitude of the listener. She faced Paul now but she was too remote for him to distinguish her features through the concealing veil. Yet he fancied that she looked at him and the priest spoke of him. He would have liked to hear what was said. Perhaps he asked the afflicted one if she were acquainted with the foreign officer who had besought him to hasten.

At hazard Fontenay went up to them, solely urged by curiosity, unaccountable but irresistible. Before he took ten steps, she had again sunk upon her knees, and the priest, after sprinkling holy water upon the bier, commenced the prayers for the dead.

This simple scene caused the young captain to take off his hat and say a few words for the repose of an enemy whom he would have pitilessly slain on the eve if at the point of his sword.

Good examples are never thrown away. Tournesol saluted like his officer, and the women around, watching over their dead ones, piously crossed themselves in stupefaction to see two of those accursed reprobates praying to heaven.

Fontenay remained spell-bound on the spot through a sentiment which he could not define. It seemed to him that some link had been forged between him and this strange lady since he had become associated in her sorrow; he had not found her in his path like one who would not play a part in his after life. It was only a very vague presentiment and yet he shuddered with emotion when he saw her rise and come straight up to him.

"I thank you!" she said in Spanish; "I thank you for praying for an enemy fallen under the bullet of one of your soldiers."

"Your—your father?" faltered the creole.

"No, senor; my husband."

The captain tried to say something befitting the occasion but could not think of it. He held his peace for

fear of uttering some conventional piece of condolence.

"You have a good heart," proceeded the young lady. "Heaven will protect you."

"Yes; if you would pray for me," softly said Marguerite's lover.

"I promise you that, senor."

In offering her hand in her excess of gratitude to the officer, she opened her mantilla which covered her face and head. Fontenay let an exclamation escape him—not expressing admiration, although the Spaniard's wonderful beauty might have drawn it from him, but surprise. The stranger resembled Marguerite de Gavre, feature for feature. Here were her forehead, her large black eyes, her lips red as the pomegranate blossom, her sunny complexion, her arched brows and the pure lines of her angelic countenance. But Marguerite was fair as wheat, and this living likeness was dark as night.

How could this strange resemblance be explained?

Mlle. de Gavre was an only child, and yet this young widow might be believed her twin sister. They differed only by the color of their hair and perhaps from the Spaniard being a year or two older.

The stupefied Fontenay regarded her without venturing to ask an elucidation of the phenomenon. Why should he interrogate her? In all likelihood she was ignorant of the name and the existence of Mlle. de Gavre. Above all, at such a moment, how could he speak to her of a stranger living in the court of the Emperor Napoleon, the conqueror of Spain.

She gave him no time to decide on what to do. After saluting him with a "*Vaya usted con Dios!*" equivalent to an entreaty to be allowed to retire, she drew the mantilla again over her face and knelt still again beside the husband's bier.

The priest was finishing the prayer for the dead.

Fontenay could do nothing but go away. He beckoned Tournesol to follow him, and they quitted this lugubrious cathedral square where he had made so extraordinary an encounter. The orderly had seen all, but he did not understand why his captain was agitated when the Spanish lady showed her face. Not having the privilege of entry into the Empress' court, Tournesol had never

seen Josephine's charming reader. It follows that he could not remark the resemblance so strongly striking Paul Fontenay. He attributed the young officer's amazement to the effect produced by the sudden appearance of a beautiful young woman, and he ventured to say:

"That lady must be good-hearted, and no mistake, to fret and grieve over the loss of the old gentleman. I know some in my country who would not tear out their hair if they had the same kind of loss. Ah! she will not have to strain her eyes much, looking for number two, when she wants to marry again! It worries me to think of her taking up with one of these yellow vultures, who have done us so much mischief and would do us more—for Old Nick alone knows how all this will end."

Fontenay was not in the humor to debate upon the war in Spain with his orderly, and still less to inform him of the true cause of the effect exerted upon him by the young widow. He therefore abstained from replying to Tournesol who did not persist, and he took the road again to the Portillo outlet where he expected to rejoin the marshal to keep their three o'clock appointment.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BAFFLED RESCUER.

The town traversed for the second time, appeared even more distressing. At every step, in the ploughed up streets, they had to clamber over dead bodies, and Fontenay wished his ears were stopped, not to hear the groans of the dying and lamentations of bereaved women. He longed to be out of this vale of tears and ardently wished never to re-enter it.

Marshal Lannes was still on the spot where his subordinate had left him, waiting after the review to watch the preparations for the removal of Palafox who was to be sent into France that night. He was lying in the litter with the horses ready and surrounded by troops selected to escort him—or rather to guard.

Among his staff-officers, Lannes was issuing orders and receiving reports. However busy, he saw the young captain hesitating to enter the brilliant circle and called him by his name.

Paul advanced and, as Napoleon had done at Chamartin, he inquired:

"Do you know Spanish?"

If he could have lied to the leader putting the question before his aids, Fontenay would have denied, for he foresaw that he was wanted to serve again as interpreter; but he was compelled to answer affirmatively.

"I have a commission to intrust to you which you will fulfill better than anybody," said the marshal. "General Palafox is a prisoner of war, who is to be sent into France under good escort. During the journey I require him to be treated with all the regard due his rank and his handsome defense of Saragossa. He does not speak French

and he must have some channel through which to express his wishes and needs; it is important that the officer should be a gentleman. This is why I select you to accompany the general. You will not be expected to guard him; that is the business of the commander of the escort. You have merely to receive his reclamations if he should make any, but try to manage so that he cannot complain of the treatment accorded him by the Emperor in consideration of his bravery. He is authorized to take only his valet with him—not a Spaniard. You will remain by him as far as Bayonne. There he will be transferred to the general commanding the division, who will have him transported to Vincennes, where he is to reside."

"May I ask you, marshal, if I am to rejoin your staff immediately after acquitting myself of the commission intrusted to me?"

"No, I do not see any inconvenience in your keeping on for Paris. You are one of the Emperor's household troops, provisionally detached for the Army of Aragon. It is for him to determine about sending you back to me or employing you beside his person. I am very well satisfied with your services during the siege just ended. The Emperor knows this, and if he be pleased to place you again at my disposal, I shall be very glad to include you definitely among my staff-officers."

A soldier must not thank a marshal of France like a citizen may a state official who grants him a favor, and Fontenay uttered no pretty speech to show his gratitude.

"When do I start, marshal?" he simply said.

"In one hour. The party will stop at Las Casetas, a hamlet, two leagues off; at Tudela after to-morrow; at Pampeluna on the sixth day; then three stages to Bayonne *via* Tolosa and Irun. In twelve days from this, the illustrious prisoner must be in French territory. Hence there is no time to be lost. Go, sir, and present yourself immediately to General Palafox. He has been forewarned that one of my officers will come to take his orders."

The question tormenting Fontenay so long had been solved by the marshal. He would return into France and see Marguerite de Gavre again. Heaven would do the

rest. His heart overflowed with joy. He could not withhold this happy news from Tournesol, who did not cling to Spain, and that nothing should be wanting for his delight, Zolnycki told of the selection of himself to command the escort battalion, instead of its leader, too severely wounded in the last attack on the Cosso. Here was an unlooked for stroke of luck, and they agreed at once to part as seldom as possible; to eat together, to sleep under the same tent and to help one another at need.

By experience the Polish officer knew that the convoys were often attacked, and he was a little alarmed by the responsibility weighing upon him in guarding a personage of Palafox's importance.

Fontenay, beside the prisoner daily, would be well placed to discover any plot for rescue or escape, and to aid his brother-officer to baffle it.

With his hat off he hastened to go up to the vehicle in which the glorious vanquished warrior, stretched on a mattress, awaited the starting order.

Palafox seemed possessed only by a breath of life, and his countenance, emaciated by privations, exclusively expressed haughty indifference. With icy coldness he received Fontenay's unstinted marks of courteous respect, and he barely answered a few words to his declarations of devotedness, although he should have been flattered by the marshal's attention in designating an officer for the delicate post, who spoke Spanish exceedingly well.

Fontenay was not vexed at his being so reserved. This greatly simplified his task, and whatever his admiration for the heroic defender of Saragossa, he had not yearned to converse with him all the long days' march of this military journey. He preferred to do so with Zolnycki, always interesting, and it would no doubt suffice if he frequently went to hear the prisoner's wishes and to offer his services.

Before speaking to him for the first time, Fontenay sent Tournesol out to prepare all for the expedition to France, and while awaiting his return with horses and baggage, he examined the conveyance, its team and conductors. It was drawn by four mules, on which rode two *arrieros*, closely watched by eight Vistula soldiers. In-

stead of the driver, the general's valet sat on the box—a sturdy fellow, clad in a black suit; huge bushy red whiskers enframed a visage with marked features. He had the look of an Englishman, but upon a question about his nationality from Fontenay he replied that he was a Swiss. There was nothing to astonish in this as the Swiss were then numerous in Spain, and many fought in the regular Spanish army. At Bayleu, under Castanos' orders, two Swiss regiments had greatly contributed to the French defeat.

This Switzer had done well to quit domestic service for that of one of Ferdinand VII.'s best generals until the present downfall.

Fontenay deemed it useless to question him on his past life. The valet would not have shrunk from lying and, anyway, it little mattered if he had made common cause with the insurgents. All that was necessary was to watch him, to prevent his helping the captive to escape.

Fontenay feared nothing in that respect, for Palafox was not able to move one foot before another, still less to mount a horse. When Saragossa capitulated, he lay a week on a bed of pain, and while remaining the soul of the defense, he took no active part in it from inability to stand.

Fontenay was rather astonished that Palafox should have a body-servant who would have made a handsome figure in a British peer's household, for Palafox was a true Spartan, disdainful of all we call comforts. He contented himself with little, like all his race, and his sole servants had been soldiers. Perhaps this one had become a domestic from enthusiasm and not to abandon a respected leader in misfortune.

But his face was hard and false. He never looked anyone in the eyes, and, when his own were by an exceptional chance fixed upon a person, they expressed no kindly feeling.

Fontenay thought that he wore a wig of the same hue as the whiskers. As he was not young he had a right to be bald and shield his head from the colds caught in a land where the temperature often varies fifteen degrees in a day.

The captain at one instant questioned himself upon his

having somewhere seen this wily and malevolent physiognomy, but his taxing of memory was all in vain; he could not manage to utilize the suspicion, as soon fled as conceived. He resolved to observe him and particularly recommend him to Tournesol, who had no peer in familiarizing himself with persons and extracting secrets artfully.

All was ready; the order for departure arrived and the party took the Tudela road under Zolnycki's command; the vehicle and the baggage were in the column's center, preceded by his scouts and followed by a strong rear-guard.

The first stage did not cover much way; the road following the Ebro's course was easy; the indicated bivouac was reached without noteworthy event.

Zolnycki's instructions advised him to camp out as much as possible, and they passed the night in a field where they lighted large fires, a hundred paces from a hamlet of six dwellings, none being secure enough to lodge the prisoner in. He was better guarded among the soldiers forming square around the carriage, and the two officers could tranquilly dine under canvas after all precautions were taken against both escape and a guerilla attack.

Tournesol had laid in a store of provisions at Saragossa, where all was at the victor's call, and nothing was absent. Invited for form's sake, the general abstained from taking part of the supper. He did not leave his carriage, and his valet-de-chambre slept on the mules' litter with the drivers. The Gascon had attempted to make the acquaintance of the Swiss, but his efforts were thrown away and he had to give it up, for that night, at all events.

Fontenay began to recover from the surprises and emotions of the decisive day. Zolnycki, after sincerely congratulating him on his return into France, urged him to try to re-enter the imperial establishment. He reminded him that the warmest place is near the sun. He, himself, did not seek this, as he had no ambition, and wished for nothing in the world save the restoration of the kingdom of Poland, but he considered it wiser for his young friend to serve under Napoleon's eyes instead of con-

tinuing to battle obscurely in Spain. Fontenay relished this counsel. He saw himself upon the path to glory, and a splendid military fortune, while without venturing to mention it to the Pole—sure of seeing his betrothed again.

It was a little late to introduce her into their conversation on the eve of separating, perhaps forever, from his dear companion-in-arms; but he could not withhold a relation of the incident on the cathedral square.

Zolnycki appeared to take no great interest in this tale; horrors no longer affected one who had seen so many since battling Spain, and Spanish beauties touched him still less.

"They are all alike," he said disparagingly, "when you see one you have seen a hundred. With their hair so deep a blue as to be black and their eyes so elongated that there is no end to them, they seem to come of the same family. I can hardly distinguish one from another, though it is true I never look at any of them closely," added the puritanic captain, smiling.

"You are unfair, comrade—some are bewitching."

"I do not deny it, but they do not please me. In Poland there are brunettes, but not all cast in the same mold. Each has her own peculiar character. I preferred the blondes when I was a young man. If you remain only six months more in Spain, where there are none but *morenas*, you will come over to my side."

Zolnycki was preaching to a convert, for Fontenay believed no woman deserved comparison with Marguerite de Gavre, and willingly granted the inferiority of the dark-complexioned. But he did not say which kind ensnared his heart. This avowal would have led to further confidences, and it was not really worth while to begin them when but a limited number of days would be passed in the pleasant intimacy of the brave captain. At the best he could give only vague advice, as he was fated most probably never to meet Mlle. de Gavre.

The chat ceased. Both officers were ready to drop with weariness, but before taking greatly needed repose, Zolnycki had to go the rounds of the camp to make sure everybody was at their posts. He went out and Fontenay soon did the same to learn if General Palafox wanted

anything of him. He found him sleeping, or feigning sleep, behind the closed blinds of his carriage and he did not care to arouse him.

The Swiss was stretched upon the straw beneath the *calash*; the muleteers were snoring among the legs of their animals. If the creole had had to draw up a report on the spot he would have written but two words—"Nothing new."

As he was returning to the tent, he was met by Tournesol, who said:

"I could not get a word out of that brute. He pretended not to understand French, though I would put my hand in the fire on his understanding it very well."

"Very possibly; the Swiss speak three or four languages in their own country, and—"

"He is no more Swiss than your honor—and as for being a servant, captain, he is as much one as I am a senator of the empire."

"What makes you fancy this?"

"Just see him talking with his master when they do not suspect they are looked at. The more respectful of the brace is not the valet, but the general."

"What are you saying?"

"Plain truth, captain. I do not know their satanic tongue thoroughly, but I have caught hold of a few words. A while ago I used the carriage as wind-guard when lighting my pipe, they not a-seeing me—I heard Palafox address the other as 'senor'—which means, 'sir' or 'my lord,' as the case may be, does it not? The Spanish are much too proud to 'master' a servant. And the general added another title—he said '*Senor Conde*!'"

"A count! Come, come, you have misunderstood!"

"Not so, captain. I am sure not. And if '*conde*' means 'count,' the man is a nobleman disguised as a lackey."

This is very unlikely. What would he gain by brushing Palafox's clothes and taking his food to him in bed?"

"Who can tell? he may be an insurgent leader condemned to death by one of our court-martials. He is hunted after and is trying to steal out of Spain."

"Good, so far! but he would not take refuge in France,

whither Palafox is going. Supposing you have guessed right, this man would not walk into the wolf's jaws by crossing the Pyrenees with our prisoner. There are police on the frontier who would have his description. They will look at him more closely than Marshal Lannes and your count will be arrested at Bayonne."

"Oh, he will have taken his safe-guards," retorted Tournesol. "He is a cunning rogue and I'll wager that his passport is beautifully correct."

"I was not ordered to ask him for it," interrupted the West Indian. "That is a matter for the police and constabulary. I have only to look after the general, and I answer for it that your false Swiss will not succeed in rescuing him if that is what he went into his service to do. The Polanders are brave fellows, incapable of taking bribes and their captain and I will sleep with one eye open as far as Bayonne where our mission terminates. But never mind! Keep on the watch and if anything new is learnt by you on the journey, come to tell me immediately."

"I shall not fail, captain."

Fontenay entered the tent, rather moody over the information furnished by his orderly. If this were a nobleman, he would not have turned valet except to favor the flight of Palafox, and the captain promised himself to watch him narrowly. He did this on the next day and those ensuing, but nothing occurred.

The capture of Saragossa had struck a heavy blow to the Aragonese insurgents. The guerrillas retired into the mountains to await a favorable moment to return into action. All the land was occupied militarily by the French, and the principal towns received garrisons that held the neighboring peasants in respect.

The roads were therefore fairly safe and not too difficult while the convoy went up the Ebro valley, skirting the fine canal commenced in the reign of Charles V. and only finished in 1775 under Carlos III.

The rumor had spread that the Vistula Legion was conducting General Palafox into France as a prisoner, and people came to see him go by—in dismay, but silent. Not one uttered an imprecation on the victors, but not

one a cheer in honor of the defeated. He was saluted—that was all.

At Tudela, a salvo of artillery received them. The commander of the place, a veteran and a martinet, wished to fire exactly the regulation number of shots over the entry of a general-in-chief! Zolnycki and Fontenay, and Palafox himself vainly begged him to omit this honor. But this dread amateur of cannonading would not spare them one load. More and more taciturn, Palafox seemed completely resigned to his fate, and the valet continued to act his part so neatly that Fontenay gradually was deceived. Though he had studied the suspicious character without showing he did so, he had not once caught him in fault.

All went well to Pampeluna.

There, only a score of leagues separated them from Bayonne, but Navarre had to be crossed, a veritable maze of ravines and defiles suitable for ambushades. They doubled their precautions, and one evening, near Elizondo, they had to camp in the mouth of a gorge of no inviting aspect.

Zolnycki was used to mountain warfare from practice before the siege, with his company. He placed his men to guarantee them from a surprise, planting sentinels on the nearest heights and massing his main body around the prisoner's carriage. He took care to have large fires kindled before and behind his bivouac, to prevent the enemy using the darkness to fall unawares upon the head or rear. Half his men slept while the others watched.

Palafox was well guarded.

Fontenay had seconded his comrade to his best, and meant not to lie down so as to be the sooner ready in case of alarm.

The first part of the night passed quietly, and he took a seat near Zolnycki before the tent they had shared since leaving Saragossa. It was pitched outside the square formed by the soldiers, and consequently stood in the shadow. Here they commanded the brightly illuminated road and saw all that happened.

When Tournesol's officer was awake, he did not sleep, and he came up softly to show him that he was also vigilant.

"What about the valet?" inquired Fontenay.

"Well, he is in his usual place, among the mule-drivers, smoking his cigarette like a true Spaniard."

"A habit he acquired in this country."

"I suppose I must believe so since your honor says it, but I always heard that the Swiss only used pipes. But this is the first time, since we set out, that he has not gone to bed like the fowls at nightfall. My idea is that he expects some 'night-cap,' hot and strong! The general is not sleeping either. The muleteers are shamming it—for I distrust them, too."

"My good fellow," said Zolnycki, "if these gentry tried to decamp, they would not get off far. My men have the order to shoot them down if they attempt it; each has his man assigned him; two for the two muleteers; one for the servant; and they will execute the order. They will not touch the general who cannot move, but they will 'do' for the others. Besides, I will go have a look at them. Will you come, Fontenay?"

Fontenay was agreeable if only to rouse himself, for he had felt slumber creep over him on the stool where he sat. He rose and proceeded toward the calash with the captain.

They had not taken ten steps before the shout of "To arms!" burst out in front of them, immediately followed by gun-shots. A dozen Spaniards had forced the line of sentinels; they surrounded the vehicle and the valet, who had leaped up in a twinkling.

Surprised by the abruptness of the onslaught, the Polish began to defend themselves with their bayonets, but there was firing upon them from the top of the rocks overhanging the highway; some soldiers fell. Others ran to the help of comrades. It was a general encounter and high time for the two captains to strike in and regulate the fighting.

This did not take long.

By Zolnycki's order, a detachment climbed up the heights to dislodge the insurgents who were crawling down the slope. Attacked body to body, the assailants were hurled out of the hollow square. Four were slain on the spot, but the others escaped with the two muleteers. The skirmish had not lasted five minutes and

when Fontenay arrived, firing had ceased all along the line.

The carriage had not been moved and the general was still within it, but Fontenay did not expect to see the valet who had had a capital opening to save himself with the *arrieros*. He was much astonished to see him standing by the door-way, in the attitude of a respectful servant giving his master an account of a traveling accident.

Fontenay roughly challenged him, but Palafox intervened. He sounded the eulogy of this faithful servant who might have left him, for there was a moment when all was clear, but he had remained out of devotedness, sacrificing his liberty to share the captivity of the hero of Saragossa.

Paul did not know what to believe, and all he could do was to surround the carriage with six soldiers, with fixed bayonets, ready to pierce the Switzer if he dared to change his place.

Zolnycki came up to join his brother-officer. The foray had failed. The peasants attempting it were fleeing over the mountains. But it had nearly succeeded from their boldness and a trick which the guerrillas had invented (for one cannot believe they had heard "Macbeth" recited to them in Spanish); sheltered behind cut boughs simulating bushes, they had gradually crept up to the sentinels. Three of these they had surprised and stabbed by help of this screen enabling them to elude the soldiers posted on the road.

Were they acting in concert with General Palafox?

Zolnycki was loth to think this, and he did not at all believe in the valet's connivance, for Tournesol, who had a near view of the incident, was obliged to state that the countrymen, trying to deliver him against his will, surrounded him, but he had grasped the carriage to resist them and had finally wrested himself out of their hands.

On the whole the raid might have turned out much worse. The two muleteers forced into service at Saragossa had marched unwillingly. They had taken advantage of the opportunity to disappear, but it was not difficult to replace them by a couple of volunteers from the troop.

The prisoner had not fled and France was not far. The ordeal was near an end. Zolnycki had conscientiously gone through it. It was not his fault that he was attacked, and he had justified Marshal Lannes' confidence.

Fontenay had likewise performed his duty, but he still thought of the valet and he resolved upon pointing him out to the military authorities on arriving at Bayonne; they would soon discover if he were a gentleman or simply a "gentleman's gentleman."

CHAPTER XX.

SLIPPING THROUGH THE FINGERS.

On the next day but one, the illustrious prisoner and his escort crossed the frontier and reached Bayonne very late in the evening. The gates were closed and the battalion had to camp outside to conform with the military regulation prohibiting armed troops any entrance into a place of war after sunset; a rule observed in Bayonne since the war with Spain.

Zolnycki had to remain with his Polanders, but the vehicle was allowed to pass with the officer representing Marshal Lannes. The commander of the escort delegated his powers to Fontenay to conduct Palafox to the residence of the general commanding the division and thence to the citadel where his resting-place was prepared.

At this period the town was crowded with soldiers going into Spain or returning, and the news having spread of the arrival of the glorious defender of Saragossa, all the population was afoot so that the picket of gendarmes preceding the hospital-bed on wheels had considerable trouble to clear a way through the thronged streets.

The valet had retaken his place on the box, and, as he was not wearing livery, some good citizens took him for Palafox and imagined that this torch-light procession had been organized to honor the defeated foe.

Not for an instant did Fontenay lose sight of this dubious person and Tournesol, to be nearer him, never went away from the four mules dragging the vehicle two-by-two in the Spanish mode. The self-styled Swiss did not seem in the least intimidated by this mob and clamor. He seemed not to notice them, indeed, and did not look down on the gaping sight-seers gathered on the way. Now he could not escape surely, and Fontenay would soon know all about him.

The generals, having been advised, waited for the prisoner in the house court-yard and hastened to advance to aid his descent from the vehicle. When he presented himself, he found the valet, who had jumped down from the box, opening the door, but he stepped briskly aside to make room for him.

Fontenay had retired a little from delicacy, and Tournesol could not pierce the hedge of officers around the calash. But Fontenay was quickly recalled by the general who wanted to compliment Palafox and knew no more of his tongue than Palafox did of French.

Again Fontenay had to act as interpreter, though he would gladly have dispensed with the honor. He had to translate courteous phrases and replies not less so. It was a battle of politeness, and he had the satisfaction of hearing the captive praise the young captain for his kind acts during the journey. Palafox expressed the wish to rest a couple of days before resuming the journey; the general authorized his enjoying three, offered his regrets at being obliged to house him in the citadel—on which point he had formal orders—and announced that the treatment he would receive throughout France would be worthy of his rank and his valor. He terminated his speech with the classical flourish: "Honor to courage in misfortune!"

He did not mention Vincennes, where the prisoner would be confined until the peace, and he ordered his being taken into the citadel—in plain words, into prison.

To accomplish his duty to the end, Fontenay wished to accompany him there. He took leave of the general, who congratulated him and replaced him beside the vehicle. This digression had made him forget the valet and it was not till they were going out of the court-yard that he perceived that the man had not again mounted the box. Where could he be? Tournesol, whom he questioned, had not seen him since. On telling the prisoner of his domestic's disappearance, Palafox did not appear startled; he said that the man had relatives in Bayonne to whom he had hastened to give his greeting, and that his absence would not be long. Fontenay did not persevere, but he no longer doubted that Tournesol had divined the truth on the day when he said the

sham Switzer aimed to get into France without a passport.

The knave had succeeded. There was no time to arrest him, for he had no doubt some ready shelter in the town. In the changed escort, too, there might have been some accomplice to aid his gliding away among the curious spectators who had been allowed within the court-yard.

This was annoying, but Fontenay, all things considered, could not be responsible for the flight of a man whom he was not charged to guard.

Palafox had certainly been informed of the man's intention and had probably favored its execution. It was not he who could be relied upon to inform the French authorities of the true story of the fugitive. No doubt he knew him well and the more importance the person held in Spain, the less the general would be disposed to tell the truth about him to their enemies.

Fontenay consequently gave up the idea of extracting information from the prisoner, but not of obtaining the explanation thereafter of the strange disappearance, relying a little on chance, which plays so grand a part in the dramas upon the world's stage. He resolved to leave his description at Bayonne before departing and at Paris as soon as he arrived.

As quickly as possible he sought to travel thither and he bore an order, written by Marshal Lannes, authorizing him to rejoin the imperial staff. He was therefore, free to travel upon the road. But the traveling would not be pleasant. From Bayonne to Paris is two hundred and fifty leagues, and the stage-coach took a week to cover the ground; and it was not easy to get a seat.

The young captain no longer had the post-chaise which had brought him here at the Empress' expense, and the state of his purse did not allow his purchasing one. The post, beside, was deficient in horses, for the road was crowded with official travelers who had to be served before all others.

On the day but one previously, an aid-de-camp of the Duke de Montebello, Colonel Guéhéneuc, had passed through, carrying the news to Paris of the capitulation of Saragossa and outstripping Fontenay's party on the road.

There was a means: to ride with a postillion, changing

horses at every relay. Fontenay decided on this at the risk of arriving exhausted. He further resolved to bring Tournesol, who had undergone worse rides—with the understanding that he might be left on the road if horses were not to be procured.

He had no more to do but bid Zolnycki farewell, and he found him next day in the town barracks with his men. He did not omit telling him of the valet's disappearance, but Zolnycki was of the opinion that there were no grounds for his tormenting himself farther. The scamp was not worth an officer's busying himself, and, if he had any evil designs, it was the place of the police to prevent their execution.

Zolnycki much more concerned himself over his comrade's prospects and more than once showed his regret at his leaving. Would they ever see one another again, and if so, where? The brave Pole hoped it would be on some battle-field far from this dreadful country where the war was a series of inglorious skirmishes and ambuscadoes. He feared to hope it and only too clearly foresaw that the Vistula Legion would not very soon quit accursed Spain.

"But I may return," said Fontenay to solace him.

"If you do, remember you have a brother in the Army of Aragon," returned Zolnycki.

They separated sadly, and Fontenay employed the rest of the morning in preparing for the long ride. He had to have his order to travel countersigned by the general of division and the paymaster hand him the balance of the five hundred napoleons offered her West Indian favorite by the Empress Josephine. The sum on account, taken in November on going over the border, had amply sufficed to defray expenses during a campaign in which the luxurious Vergoncey himself had not been able to squander five hundred francs. But it would not be so at Paris. The young captain was compelled to make a good figure in the palace and he was returning from the war very sadly accoutered. His uniform was worn threadbare. All his wardrobe required replenishing upon arrival in the capital.

At noon, all was ready for the start. As they were bestriding the post-nags, Tournesol said in confidence to

his officer, with whom he had not had much time to converse during the morning spent in his running about to make purchases:

"Captain, I really believe I have run up against that Spanish valet."

"And you did not lay hands on him!" exclaimed Fontenay.

"I did not dare as I was not sure it was he; he did not wear his red whiskers and was dressed like a priest, yes, a Spanish priest, with a long shovel hat rolled up at the side and sticking out a foot beyond his shaven face like a ship's jib-boom. If it is a disguise, I warrant him one who knows how to disguise himself!"

The American suddenly recalled what George de Prégny had said at Chamartin about the Tio's talent in changing his face and his costume, and he wondered if he were the man.

"I am sure that he has won his point," pursued Tournesol. "He wanted to get into France and we brought him beautifully into it!"

CHAPTER XXI.

AN OMINOUS INVITATION.

On setting out for Spain, the American had continued his tenancy of the modest suite of rooms occupied by him in the rue Saint Nicaise, Paris, a few steps from the Palace du Carrousel. The dwellings greatly obstructing it were demolished under the second empire, as well as the tortuous lanes communicating with the Palais-Royal. In this street the first consul escaped by a miracle from the infernal machine, houses still bearing for eight years afterward the tokens of the explosion which shook the entire district.

On arriving from the West Indies at the end of 1802. the young colonial gentleman had lodged here to be near the Tuileries, whither his patroness, the Empress, frequently called him, and he had remained.

When again he alighted after the ride from Bayonne to Paris, he was exhausted to such a degree that he had to lie down, and he was very glad he had brought Tournesol with him, as he had never kept a servant-man and had brushed his own clothes and pulled off his boots.

Tournesol, tougher than a captain only twenty years old, and in particular better accustomed to long rides, was not badly shaken, and he was worth any two Parisian servants for activity.

An hour after his officer was reposing, he was out on the errand of seeking George de Prégny, who lived in the Rue de la Lio, now Rue de Richelieu. He was delighted over his dear friend Paul's being in town.

He was engaged all the morning, but he came to the captain's at three o'clock.

After sleeping till noon, Fontenay had risen for a summary breakfast cooked by Tournesol, who knew how to make everything, omelets included.

It will readily be believed that conversation did not flag between the two friends. They had so many things to tell one another that they did not know where to begin. As always happens after a separation, the questions met one another, without the answers being waited for before passing to another subject.

But they soon exhausted the chapter of general topics and George, reading the creole's mind, said without any preface:

"She is still fond of you."

"Is that really true?" ejaculated Paul at the climax of happiness.

"I am sure of it. But you were not expected home so soon."

"Do you mean I am wrong to return?"

"Certainly not; but if you were to drop on them in the palace like a bombshell, you would upset the Empress' circle and Mlle. de Gavre would probably faint. You must give me time to play the herald to you, which I will do this evening. The Empress will receive in her private drawing-room, and you know I am one of the privileged."

"Oh, I was not projecting to present myself this day. I must previously place myself in order as regards military authorities. I am on a regular leave, but my first visit is due to the minister of war. I ought to see him before requesting an audience of the Emperor."

"You may have to wait for that, as he is overburdened with business. He hardly looks in at the Empress' receptions. You know that war with Austria is decided upon."

"So they said in Spain, and Vergoncey wrote me to that effect."

In a month the Emperor will start for Strasburg, where the Empress will perhaps go to join him, but that is not sure. By the way, my dear Paul, all has changed since you went away. Where are the lovely days at Malmaison? We will celebrate the 19th March, St. Joseph's day, the patrons of our dear patroness—but it will perhaps be the last time, and I fear the festival will not be merry."

"Why not? what has happened?"

"I do not keep the secret of the gods—but I see and I hear. Divorce is in the air."

"Is it possible! I knew that it had been suggested to the Emperor, but I believed he thought no more of it."

He is urged to it more strenuously than ever, and the most dangerous of all these evil counselors is the minister of the police Fouché. But let us drop that subject—too sad a one—and return to you and your *fiancée*, for she is ever that. Before all her ladies, the Empress lately alluded to your marriage after the war."

"I am afraid that is a long way off," sighed the impatient American. "You are badly informed here of what goes on in Spain."

"The main fact is that you can be sure of marrying Mlle. de Gavre. Tell me what you have been doing on her behalf in Spain, for I was forced to quit Chamartin without seeing you. You met the Tio at Somo Sierra where the villain, most fortunately, missed you again. I suppose you have never heard anything more about him, eh?"

"You are wrong. I saw him again shortly after your departure, and this time it was I who missed him."

"How so?"

Fontenay briefly related his visit to the bank of Madrid and all that followed it. George listened frowning, and remarked at the end:

"Plague take it! the chances are that the Tio laid hands on the deposit. But you ought to have made certain on that head; by applying to the governor of Madrid you could have ascertained how things stand."

"I would not have overlooked it but I had to follow the Emperor that same night, who marched upon the English. He kept me by him for a fortnight, and I nearly stopped there altogether as I fell ill and was three months abed. On rising, without time to take breath, I was hurried to the siege of Saragossa, where I came near losing my life a dozen times. I come from there. You will understand now how I had no leisure there to gather information about the Gavre property."

"I understand, but I deplore it."

"By the way, I made up that quarrel with Carénac."

"The swash-buckler who was so bent upon fighting you at Malmaison?"

"Yes, we became very good friends since we stormed a stronghold side by side."

"I am glad to hear it. You owe it to him that you were betrothed by the Empress. But for that duel, you would not have met her in the gardens, and things would probably have been slow to come to pass. It is also true that Uncle Blas would not have fired his pistol in your face—but you got out of it so neatly! So, you have not met the scoundrel since your stroll in the streets of Madrid?"

"I am not quite able to answer you. A strange adventure has just happened me at Bayonne."

Paul detailed another story, the journey with Palafox from Saragossa up to the valet's inexplicable disappearance. Instead of remonstrating with Paul on the unlikelihood of his suppositions, George shook his head, saying:

"This tallies with the reports Fouché has received concerning this man. If it is he who has entered France, disguised as a domestic, he has returned to assassinate the Emperor—"

"Or Mlle. de Gavre!"

"No; he has no need to harm her, since he has secured her fortune. He aims at the Emperor, and your duty is to notify the powers civil and military of his arrival. You have already too much delayed."

"Whom am I to notify? the Empress? it is very useless to alarm her."

"That is why I counsel you not to say one word of your story to her, but to relate the whole to the commander of the Gendarmerie d'Elite. He is a military officer, and your superior, and especially charged to watch over the Emperor's safety."

"You are right. It is repugnant for me to deal with a police *agent*—with this Fouché, for instance, who is the enemy of our good Josephine."

"Fouché is a vile gentleman, but he is an abler man alone than all the others together. He has already information about this fellow from his spies, who are everywhere."

"That may be, but they serve him badly since they could not lay hands on the rascal when he came to rob Mlle. de Gavre at Malmaison."

At this point the door opened a little and Tournesol interjected:

"Captain, a gentleman wants to see you."

"Answer him that I am receiving nobody, and learn his name."

"I asked him it, captain, and he said that you would not know him, but that he came on behalf of the Duke of Otranto."

"I do not know any Duke of Otranto," exclaimed the American, not deeply versed in the new titles showered on some high civil functionaries; he only remembered those of the marshals. "Tell the *pekin* to go where it is hotter!"

"Very well, captain," militarily answered Tournesol, going off to carry out the order without any modification, but M. de Prégny beckoned him to come in and close the door.

When he was quite sure that the visitor could not hear him from the room where he was left, George resumed, addressing his friend:

"What! were you ignorant that the Duke d'Otranto is Fouché? Why, where on earth do you come from?"

"From Spain, of course, where there is no question raised about such a duke. What can he want with me?"

"I cannot guess, but you may inquire of his envoy, for you cannot avoid receiving him. A refusal would bring disagreeable results upon you which had better be prevented."

"This is a little too much! I have only arrived this morning, and already this minister, whom I have never seen, pounces upon me!"

"You must allow that he is well informed."

"Only too well, the prying creature! I will have the gentleman shown in whom he sent, on condition that you witness the interview. Tournesol, bring him in!"

In twenty seconds Fouché's representative presented himself. He was evidently no subaltern, for he was dressed in a fine black suit and wore gold spectacles, and a white neckcloth; his appearance was that of the director of a branch of the civil service. He bowed to

Fontenay on entering and looked at George de Prégny inquiringly, which induced him, understanding it, to state his name and position as auditor of the state council.

The visitor bowed again and said to the West Indian: "Captain, I am instructed to inform you that his excellency the Duke d'Otranto desires to see you immediately."

These pompous designations nettled the American. Lannes, though Duke of Montebello and the capturer of Saragossa, contented himself with much less, as he let his officers style him the marshal.

"What does this duke of yours want of me?" roughly inquired Paul.

"His excellency did not deem it proper to inform me. I am merely instructed to conduct you to the ministerial officers."

"I can go there very well alone."

"But his carriage awaits us at your door, and if you would please to step into it with me, we should arrive the sooner."

"How, now?—but—if you came to arrest me, you would not proceed otherwise—suppose I am not pleased to follow you? I am curious to see what you would do! Carry me off by force?—me, a staff-officer of the Emperor's body-guard!"

With a glance George entreated his fiery colonial friend to be silent, and it was he who said, without emotion, to the police minister's employé:

"You see, sir, that Captain Fontenay was so far from expecting the call this day to the Duke of Otranto's that he was not able to prevent expressing his surprise in rather unstudied terms. You will excuse him. He will go with you, while I go straight to the Tuileries to announce to his brother-officers on the staff of his majesty that they will see him this evening.

Fontenay comprehended that George used this language to show the police minister's messenger that the young captain had friends in a high quarter who would inquire after him if his absence were too greatly prolonged. This was a precaution taken against any malicious trick of which Fouché was perfectly capable, for he

never shrink from arbitrarily imprisoning persons, as he knew how to invent motives to explain his conduct afterward.

Strong in his conscience, the creole was not at all alarmed over the sequel of this new adventure, even less expected than previous ones, and he said contemptuously:

"Let us go, sir. His excellency will have to excuse my appearing in undress. I have only the clothes I am wearing and I have worn them out in war in the Emperor's service. Where am I to find you, George?"

"Will the Palais Royal suit you, at five o'clock?" replied the auditor. "We can have dinner with some friends."

"Willingly, for I do not suppose that the duke will do me the honor of retaining me at his table," ironically rejoined the incorrigible jester.

The man in the gold spectacles pretended not to hear this gibe, and stalked over to the door, while Fontenay put on, over his uniform, the cloak which Tournesol brought. George accompanied him to the coach awaiting below; it had attracted several dwellers in the street, little accustomed to see such equipages. It was a closed-up landau, drawn by a pair of stout horses and driven by a coachman out of livery. A footman, in black, stood at the door-way, ready to step up behind the carriage, which did not bear on the panels the arms of the new Duke d'Otranto. All this indicated what was called "Spiriting away," as practiced by powerful noblemen when they had *petite maisons*. Fouché might have borrowed this system from the *ancien regime*, for application to persons whom he wished to conjure away without noise.

George de Prégny might have had some fear about his friend were it not for relying on the Empress' patronage, and as he distrusted Fontenay's temper, he whispered in his ear:

"No outbreaks, I entreat you! Tell all you know, and do not forget that you speak to a minister of the Emperor. Soon again!" he added loudly.

With a friendly wave of the hand, the messenger invited the captain to step in first. This is what gentlemen of the police force never omit to do in such cases; their politeness being prudence, they yield precedence to those

they have in custody not to lose sight of them. He took his place beside Fontenay! the footman closed the door and jumped up behind the vehicle, and it started off instantly.

Fontenay thought of Palafox's coach and sighed for the time when he escorted him on horseback. It was he now who was guarded closely and he had not the consolation of having heroically defended a Saragossa.

He did not open his lips all the journey—not a long one as the ministry of police was on the quay, near the Institute of France. The vehicle entered into a vast court-yard where the gates closed behind it. To alight, Fontenay again took the lead and walked up some narrow stairs which his obliging guide pointed out to him.

CHAPTER XXII.

NAPOLÉON'S EVIL GENIUS.

On the first landing, he found a long room, at the end of which was sitting at a desk a man in a dressing-gown, with his head done up in a handkerchief. He was writing and did not raise his eyes. Fouché's messenger closed the door on retiring and the captain walked up and down. He took the seated scribbler for a clerk and did not condescend to salute him. Soon tired of pacing the long room, and still seeing nobody but the writer, he halted in front of him and said:

"Hark ye! the minister of police has summoned me. I have no time to lose. Where is he?"

"I am the minister," replied the man, looking at him fixedly.

On seeing his full face, Fontenay recognized him by the portrait his brother-officers of the staff had more than once drawn. They had depicted Fouché's colorless and flabby face, his flat, scanty and yellow hair, his small, dull and blood-shot eyes, his expression like 'a flurried weasel's, his curt, broken speech, and his spasmodic attitude—as General Philippe de Segur has written in his memoir; the general knew him well from having contended with him.

But Fontenay never would have imagined his giving audience in such a negligent attire and his astonishment appeared upon his countenance.

"You expected to see me in my ministerial full dress, eh?" queried Fouché, divining his thoughts. "It is all very well for your generals to flaunt their gold embroidery! I am not a military man."

"I have the honor to be a military captain!" replied the American, keenly piqued.

"Since two months ago. I know how it came about. Her majesty the Empress favors you, and you owe to her an exceptional promotion."

"I have paid for it with my blood."

"I do not dispute the value of your services, but I did not call you here to speak about them."

"I am waiting for you to say about what else."

Fouché's glance became cold and clear as a steel blade.

"Where is Palafox's valet-de-chambre?" he brusquely asked.

This shot at close range might have disconcerted Fontenay; but he had almost expected it and he answered without being agitated:

"I was charged by Marshal Lannes to accompany General Palafox, but not to watch his valet."

"I grant that," said Fouché; "but you were very well aware that this valet—who was nothing of the sort—disappeared at Bayonne."

"I knew it."

"Why did you not immediately acquaint the gendarmerie commander with this disappearance?"

"Because I was not bound so to do. I am a soldier. It is not within my province to inform the police. I owe reports to my own chiefs alone."

"Then, if you were to meet this man in Paris, you would not denounce him?"

Fontenay making no reply, Fouché went on to say:

"Yet you know that he has come into France to assassinate the Emperor!"

"How should I know that?"

"Do not try to play the fox with me. I know your whole story. Four months ago, you saw this man in Malmaison Park and you learned afterward who he was. One of your friends imparted this to you in Spain whither he went to carry dispatches, and he learned it in the suite of her majesty the Empress. After having committed a theft at Malmaison to the injury of a person in whom you are interested, the man escaped my agents' searches and I had the certainty that he had returned into Spain as I have that of his recrossing into France disguised as a valet. For a fortnight, you trav-

eled with him. How is it that you did not recognize him?"

"You have yourself just told me that he was disguised and consequently was not recognizable—"

"By everybody, excepting you who had seen him closely at Malmaison."

"Yes, very closely; for he fired a pistol on me with the muzzle all but touching. I saw him again at Somo Sierra where he tried it again with a blunderbuss; but on that day, he did not wear the same face, while, at Bayonne—"

"His eyes can never be forgotten."

"I might have remembered them if I had thought of him, but I have little regarded him. I do not look at servants."

"You are wrong. All faces must be looked at and studied."

"When one belongs to the police. I am a captain."

"Then you believe that your rank excuses you from observing when his majesty's life is at stake—for this villain seeks to get near to murder him."

"I am ready to be killed for the Emperor, but I do not know how to keep up that kind of an observation, as you call it."

While replying to his high and mighty examiner, the American had not yet styled him Grace, Excellency, or even *M. le Ministre*, so averse was he to use any respectful titles to the ex-Jacobin, and regicide, for he knew very well that the future Duke d' Otranto had voted for the execution of King Louis XVI. in the convention. More than this, from the outset of the dialogue the creole had taken a chair without being asked. These independent manners were not calculated to displease Fouché, who had preserved from his revolutionary past an absolute scorn for etiquette.

"Have it so," he coldly said; "during the fortnight's journey from Saragossa to Bayonne, you paid no attention to a man whom, nevertheless, you did not once lose sight of for a single instant; it is strange, but I admit it may be true. But I cannot allow that you ought not to have notified the fact of his disappearance at Bayonne in the house-yard of the commanding general."

"Why did not the police spies who have informed you, publish the fact? I suppose they were on the spot and it was their trade to arrest him if they deemed him suspicious."

The argument struck home, for Fouché could not conceal a start of vexation, but he took care not to reply, for he would have had to reveal whence came the reports so precise and at the same time so fruitless. But he changed his tone.

"Captain," he said dryly, "you are not under my orders and you have not to give an account of your conduct to me. The Emperor shall know that it has been careless—I ought to say criminal."

"Criminal!" broke forth Fontenay losing all self-control. "Dare you accuse me of complicity with a scoundrel who seeks the Emperor's life?"

Fouché put many questions. He never answered those which it suited him to elude. This was his method and he did not depart from it on this occasion.

"I know this man is in Paris," he said. "He arrived before you and has found shelter. So did George Cadoudal, but I had him arrested. This other will not escape me. But if he forestalls my pursuit—if before I run him to earth, he succeeds in striking down the Emperor, you will have your share of responsibility in the catastrophe. You have but one means of redeeming your negligence—if it be merely negligence—it is by aiding me to find that man."

"If I fully understand you, it is proposed for me to enroll myself among your spies—I, a French officer! you do not insult me alone, but the whole army—Napoleon himself, whose orders I carried in Spain."

"You military gentlemen," interrupted Fouché slightly—"you have a craze for mouthing phrases and abusing grandly sounding words. I do not suggest your joining the police. I recommend you—in your own interest—not to repeat the folly you committed at Bayonne; I mean, omitting to 'collar' the villain when met. He would perhaps defend himself but you will soon have assistance."

"In the first place, I must be able to recognize him."

"Who could do so but you who have seen him under

two or three different costumes—you who have spoken with him and heard the sound of his voice? You will certainly encounter him. I know his ways about. He has come to do what he did when in Paris in November last. He will rove about town, preferentially near the Tuileries, lying in wait for an occasion to approach the Emperor who is wrong in sometimes going out at night, *incognito* with only Berthier, or Duroc."

Fouché said "Berthier, or Duroc," unadorned, though he thought it bad manners not to have his title of Duke d'Otranto given him, and Fontenay remembered a line in some comedy he had heard:

"With what irreverence this clown speaks of the gods!"*

But Fontenay did not frown while awaiting the sequel.

"I had the Emperor watched," continued the minister, "but he was vexed when he saw the secret guards. You having been upon his staff, will not be identified with my agents if he meets you and thus you may unsuspectedly act, indeed as a life-guard. All you will have to do is walk about before a private door of the Pavillon de Marsan at the time I will indicate to you."

"For this his majesty must give me the order," quickly replied the young captain.

"But suppose I give it to you—"

"I receive orders solely from the Emperor."

"Have a care, captain! were I to give an account of this interview of mine with you, you might repent refusing to watch over his safety, menaced by an assassin whom you alone know."

"This is what I flatly deny. I have seen him—so must your agents, since they assert he is in Paris—but I might pass beside him on the pavement without recognizing him."

"You have a very poor memory."

"For faces. I am a soldier, and we have no need to recollect if the enemy whom we cut down has been seen before."

"In a charge, but this is not a combat."

"I do not understand other things."

* "*Comme avec irrévérence parle des dieux ce maraud!*"—MOLIERE: "L'AMPHIBYON."

There fell a silence. The dry hand of Fouché nervously toyed with the Sphinx's head terminating his chair-arm, and nothing benevolent shone in the look he darted at the captain.

"It is clear," he said, suddenly assuming an indifferent mien, "that we shall never come to an understanding, and I will not detain you farther."

Fontenay did not wait to be twice told. He rose and was retiring when Fouché added:

"Still bear in mind that I offered you a fine opening for you to distinguish yourself. Do not blame any but yourself should your military career be blighted—your military career and your marriage."

"My marriage!" echoed the West Indian. "What does this mean?"

"Oh, do not assume ignorance," returned Fouché in his unemphatic voice, colorless as his eyes; "you perfectly well know to what I allude. Her majesty the Empress wishes your welfare and projected to marry you to the daughter of the late General de Gavre. It would be a very suitable match, if the Emperor granted his assent. You also know that the young lady is a Spaniard on the mother's side and that the villain who ought to be arrested is, in plain words, her uncle. The Emperor does not know this, and on learning it, I doubt that he will persist in interesting himself in the niece of such a one."

"It is not Mlle. de Gavre's fault if this scoundrel, a distant relative, not her uncle, hates the Emperor and endeavors to kill him. He also hates her and has stolen her property."

"Oh, I do not suspect her of being in concord with him. I only want you to remark that she is of his family, and that you, who aspire to marry her, would seal all mouths of the malevolent if you succeeded in handing this Blas de Montalvan over to us. You see that I know his name. You refuse this in telling me it is impossible. Let us speak no more about it. I will arrest him without your having a hand in it. Go, captain! I depend on you no longer and I hope that your refusal to serve me will not injure you in your career."

Fontenay strode forth without speaking a single word.

What had he to reply to these sugared threats? He was not regretful for preferring his honor to Fouché's favor but proud to think that his betrothed, if present, would have approved his rejection of the most powerful police minister's shameful propositions.

But he was not entirely at ease on the consequences of this refusal, disdainfully expressed. Fouché was the Empress' declared enemy, and he would not be scrupulous in trying to injure her by slandering to the Emperor an officer whom she patronized. He was fully capable of accusing him of connivance with the Spanish fanatic to whom Mlle. de Gavre had the misfortune of kinship. Absurd though the accusation was, it might find credence if skillfully presented.

The American could do nothing better than anticipate Fouché by informing the good Josephine of what had occurred, and George de Prégny, as soon as they met.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRULY THE LIFE-GUARD.

Prégny's appointment in the Palais Royal gardens was for five P. M. and it was now past four. If he arrived before his friend, Fontenay would only have to stroll about under the arcades until they met. So he proceeded there direct. He was too deeply engrossed in thought on leaving the police ministry to notice that a well-dressed man, standing before a second-hand book stall in the open street, began to follow him at a distance along the Seine river side, for the Carrousel bridge did not then exist and Fontenay had to go up-stream as far as the royal bridge to cross over on the right bank. This compulsory circuit brought dark closing in, when he reached the Palais by the wooden arcades preceding the Galerie d'Orleans much later constructed.

These wooden galleries were a curiosity, with their booths of planks forming three rows of shops and two covered walks. In the days of the Terror and still under the Directory, it was called "the Tartar's Camp," an odd title but well-befitting it, as nomads and temporary structures only were seen—a mob seeking adventures.

It was not an edifying place, and the creole hastened through it to reach the better famed stone galleries, where he hoped to find Prégny. A mixed throng blocked the way here, with many officers of the army, amusing themselves between two campaigns with only the puritans to reproach them for it. As the new-comer had only been a soldier four months, he knew none of these, and not one addressed him. He restlessly went all around the gardens without perceiving his friend.

By way of compensation, however, as he returned through the gardens, he ran up against Vergoncey, who grasped his hand warmly and vociferated:

"What, here you are! I began to fear you had died in Spain like so many other good fellows."

"Happy to say, I was never better in my life," answered Fontenay.

"Come to divert yourself a little? that chimes in nicely with the tune I was setting myself, for I never felt more jolly. We will finish the winter merrily as I wrote you from Astorga in January before quitting Spain. I hope you received my letter."

"I did, and you can imagine the pleasure it gave me."

"Oh, I do not forget my friends! but we have no time to lose if we mean to enjoy the pleasures of Paris, for as you know, the Emperor is going on a campaign again next month."

"Yes, I was told so, but I do not know about this taking me along."

"I do not doubt it. You stand high on the active list. But lately he has been unapproachable. I advise your waiting a little before asking to follow him into Germany. But since I have you in my grip I will not release you. We will dine in a restaurant and you can go up into No. 154 with me."

"What's No. 154? I thought *No. One* was the only one you concerned yourself about!"

"Ha, ha! No. 154 is a gaming house—the bank that has luck against it. Yesterday I won three hundred napoleons in less than ten minutes, and I reckon on winning as much after dinner. You ought not to be sorry yourself to load your pockets to brighten your Parisian stay. Living is so dear!"

"I have never gambled," returned the creole, who had left Martinique too young to participate in the principal diversion of the idlers there.

"So much the better! novices always win. Come, dear boy! if only to bring me luck."

"It is my dearest wish—but I am waiting for George de Prégny, who made an appointment with me here."

"Prégny! Pshaw, you'll not see him this evening. I met him on the stairs in the Tuileries. He is going to the Empress' apartments to be consulted about a concert she will give. You know that there cannot be a concert without Prégny! it's his special field—and he

will be detained a couple of hours, unless the entire evening. Nothing, therefore, prevents your accompanying me. You can look on if you do not care to play. It will interest you and when I 'win my pile' I, will offer you a feast such as we have not had for a long time. The dinners were very bad on the other side of the Pyrenees."

"In my heart I know it!" returned Fontenay bitterly.

"Well, come, my dear friend. If the vein wins in my favor, as I hope, we will have some Clos-Vougeot wine of 1790 on the table at Very's, in half an hour, that I want you to taste."

Fontenay was inclined to refuse, but it pained him to disoblige a brother-officer and since he learned that George would be detained at the palace, he had no reason to continue in the galleries to be jostled. He followed Vergoncey into No. 154, one of the four houses kept by the *Ferme des Jeux* at the Palais Royal, and the most frequented. The American had never entered one of these official gambling saloons and he was dazzled by the luxury of the rooms through which Vergoncey guided him. The latter led him, as if at home, to the table for heavy play, where only gold was on the board, or in other words the smallest stake was a napoleon.

The table was thickly encircled, and a seat could not be had until vacated by some losing player or winner satisfied to let well alone—a rarer event. The games rapidly succeeded one another; on one side the gold pieces showered down and on the other the *croupiers* raked in the lost stakes. Fontenay had seen only *trente et quarante* and the old-fashioned country card-games played, and while seeing the cards dealt in rows upon the board, he did not understand how red or black won. As he did not desire to learn the game, he turned to studying the players.

They were of all ages and professions, young and aged, civilians and soldiers. The depressed countenances outnumbered the smiling ones for the company were repairing the previous day's losses.

In front of the two new-comers, sat one officer, however, who had a heap of gold coin before him and staked large sums with unparalleled intrepidity. His uniform

was probably foreign, for Fontenay, not at all remembering it, had whisperingly to ask Vergoncey to what corps the officer belonged, for his face struck him. This heavy player was not young, though he only wore captain's epaulets, but if he had not obtained rapid promotion, he had great wealth, for he fingered thousand-franc bank-notes with perfect coolness. His features, seemingly chopped out with an ax, did not twitch, and black eyes shone over his countenance, cut in two by thick black mustachios. The physiognomy expressed indomitable energy.

"That," replied Vergoncey carelessly, "that's a Neapolitan of the new guards of King Murat. He had far better have stayed in his own country. He is raking in coin which would suit my pocket, and it enrages me to see him win them. I am going to play against him and if luck turns toward me, it will be an infinite pleasure to see him lose."

At this moment a player, whose funds were exhausted, rose near the captain who took his chair to engage more comfortably in his battle with the gaming corporation. Determined to remain a simple spectator of the combat, Fontenay stood behind his friend. He was well placed here to watch the foreign officer who had attracted his attention but who gave none to him or to Vergoncey, so enwrapt was he in his pursuit.

The first dash was not favorable to France. Fontenay's comrade's fifteen napoleons were gathered in by the *croupiers* who had to pay a hundred to the Italian, as he had staked upon black to the contrary of Vergoncey's chosen color. This was a first warning, but the loser clung to red, instead of profiting by it. A formidable sequence of blacks fell upon him, like hail on a field of wheat, and speedily put him in distress, while the Neapolitan captain increased his store at every time. One of those *coups* came which madden an unlucky player and it exasperated the captain.

Black stood at the point of thirty-nine; Vergoncey, on the red, might almost surely believe he would win. A queen of spades fell face up expressly to spite him, making forty—the worst of all the points, and the rake carried away his venture, the heaviest he had yet risked.

Red had lost and the French gold would again go over to Italy.

"It's that face of a Calabrian brigand that spoilt my luck," grumbled Vergoncey, bringing his fist down on the table.

The Neapolitan raised his head and looked at him steadily. Fontenay, standing behind his friend, had his share of the glance darted by fortune's favorite. The bystanders so fully expected a quarrel that the game stopped for awhile. They did not doubt it at all when they saw the insulted man pocket his gains and leave his seat. The *croupiers*, sworn foes of riot, prepared to intervene. All were greatly astonished to see the foreign officer stride toward the door, without thinking in the least degree of calling Vergoncey to account for what he must have heard from his speaking rather loudly. The Neapolitan was plainly leaving without risking a "revenge", as the gaming slang says.

A general burst of laughter arose, and Vergoncey ejaculated:

"At last that vile bird of ill omen has flown! perhaps luck will return to me."

Fontenay alone did not laugh. His eyes had at length met those of the stranger and that exchange of glances sufficed to awaken a sleeping memory in his mind—that of the sham valet of Palafox. It was a fleeting impression but vivid, and he did not falter a second before acting upon it. No one in the saloon paid any attention to him, and Vergoncey was too deeply enthralled in his play to busy himself about what went on behind his chair. Fontenay could slip away without anyone noticing him, and he rushed out on the stairs where he hoped to overtake the man.

When he caught sight of him he was already at the foot of them; he must have gone down them four at a time. This was a strong proof that he had suddenly recognized Marshal Lannes' staff-officer and fled from him.

Fontenay leaped all the way with a supporting touch to the balustrade, and reached the lobby at the very moment when the suspicious player stepped out into the stone gallery. He rushed after him and saw

him turn to the right but he was swallowed up in so closely packed a crowd that he had to mark time with his feet from inability to get forward. The man kept on toward the wooden galleries, without turning, clearing the throng of promenaders coming in the reverse way. Fontenay did not lose sight of him but however briskly he plied his elbows, he could not contrive to draw near him.

What would it be in the Tartar Camp, a labyrinth of temporary stalls? The man would there have every facility to disappear. To finish one way or another, Fontenay rushed, head down, into the mass. All he succeeded in reaping was insults and the hustled strollers returned his shoves. One of them, less enduring than the others, took him by the collar to stop him and when he had liberated himself, the object of the chase had vanished. The showy scarlet plume waving over his three-cocked hat, no longer guided the captain. The track was lost; the chase a failure.

Once again the American had to acknowledge that he had no aptness for the craft of dogging his fellow-men.

In the Palais Royal he was distanced as had happened him in the streets of Madrid after his unhappy visit to the bank president.

While chafing at this fresh rebuff he reflected. He wondered if he might not be mistaken and if he had not confounded the terrible Tio with a genuine officer of the Neapolitan royal guards. However far Don Blas de Montalvan carried the talent of disguise, it was difficult to believe that he could metamorphose himself to the degree of quickly and perfectly assuming the appearance of a valet, a priest and a captain. He could not change his eyes, fiery and hard in gaze, but such are common in Italy as well as Spain and resemble one another.

Another reflection arose in Fontenay's mind. He had incurred the resentment of Fouché for refusing to play the spy, and yet on the first occasion, he had darted without prompting in the pursuit of an individual whom he was not certain he had recognized. It is true that this pursuit was disinterested on his part since the man had no personal enmity toward him and Fontenay's capture of him would not win him any reward. He had

made a police-officer of himself, but *gratis*, and this idea salved his self-esteem.

He never suspected that a regular police-spy had followed him from the river side to the gaming establishment, and after awaiting for him at the door, was still at his heels, collecting the elements of a report to Fouché on the way the dispatch-bearing officer employed his evening, and intending surely to include that he ran in the stone gallery.

Fontenay had enough of this fruitless agitation and felt the need of resting and dining. The hour of appointment with George was past, and he certainly would not come, while Vergoncey, entangled in fierce play, would have forgotten that he had invited his brother-officer to test Very's *cuisine*.

All alone the creole entered that fashionable restaurant and had a choice repast served up to recruit him a little after the privations supported in Spain. He even treated himself to a bottle of that famous 1790 Clos Vougeot vaunted by Vergoncey, and judged that it merited its reputation. Choice wine temporarily calms great sorrows and inclines to sleep. At table the amorous young man forgot the unpleasant events of the day a little and only thought of repose when he had finished.

The Rue Saint Nicaise was not far, and he took the way thither on leaving the Palais by the Rue Montpensier instead of following the crowded gallery to its end. The throng irritated him, and he sought for solitude. He was suited to his wish, for he met hardly a soul up to the mouth of the narrow street where he dwelt.

There a hand-cart, shoved along by a man, in an overshirt like a working-man's, obliged him to brush the wall to let him pass, but he paid no attention and he was only three or four houses from his own where the street-lamp's light showed a couple of well-dressed men coming toward him from the end of the street. He stepped aside to leave them the side away from the central gutter.

They were speaking together and did not see him, while he saw them very clearly. Both wore round hats and long-skirted coats. He seemed to recognize the smaller one's figure, and looking more steadily, knew him without doubt.

It was the Emperor.

Fontenay knew that Napoleon sometimes walked about the city in the dusk accompanied by the Prince de Neuchâtel or Duroc the Palace Grand Marshal. Fouché had told him so, and he was not unduly astonished to see him in this street so near the Tuileries. He thought only of remaining unnoticed, the place was so ill-fitted for his requesting the much desired audience.

The Emperor would certainly have badly received him and perhaps struck him off the list of staff-officers to punish his non-respect for his incognito.

Therefore, Fontenay hid himself as best he could in the recess of a door-way and Napoleon passed by without remarking him.

The young captain was keeping his eyes upon him when he saw once more the man in the smock who was blocking up the way with his cart across it. The idea instantly struck him that the man had evil designs. The cart was loaded with carrots, parsnips and cabbages, and it was not the hour when peddlers of vegetables vend their stock in the thoroughfares.

Fontenay could not longer doubt that the man awaited the Emperor to assassinate him when he saw a dagger blade gleam in his hands by a hanging lamp's rays.

In a few seconds, Napoleon, who walked without looking before him, would be within reach of the villain.

Fontenay took a leap which placed him before the Emperor. Surprised by this intervening form the man recoiled, raising his weapon to strike.

The West Indian flew at him like a jaguar, without taking time to draw his sword and received in his breast the blow that would have pierced Napoleon if the captain had not literally shielded him with his body. But the man, violently struck, had stopped, staggering, and before he recovered his balance, he was assailed from behind.

This assailant was the police-spy who had not ceased to follow Fontenay and who ran to the help of the latter without any too well understanding what was passing. He was ill rewarded for this act of courage. The man buried his knife in his throat and slew him outright, but the poor martyr's death was of some use. The man

believed others were coming up to the rescue, to avoid being arrested, he fled at full speed, leaving his hand-cart, and disappeared around the first turning.

All this had happened almost without noise and in less time than it takes to describe it. In falling, Fontenay had not even groaned, and Fouché's myrmidon had been silenced before he could summon other agents to his aid, who were not far, as they followed the Emperor from his leaving the Tuileries, by the minister's order. They kept so respectful a distance that the danger was passed before they showed themselves.

Napoleon had remained as calm as under fire on days of battle.

"Beyond a doubt," he said, without the faintest emotion, "it is written that I am not to be assassinated in the Rue Saint Nicaise. Twice have they tried it but I live still!"

"Sire, let me suggest a return to the palace," hurriedly said the companion, no other than Berthier, Prince de Neufchatel. "The villain who sought to stab you was doubtless not alone and his accomplices perhaps lie in wait at the end of the streets—"

"They would have been on us already—but, see! they would find some one to deal with them! Fouché had me followed."

Four or five policemen in disguises came running up at full speed, called by a whistle of their sergeant.

"Sire, Fouché was not wrong, for—"

"These fellows would not have preserved me as they arrived too late. I was saved by the officer who has fallen there—in front of us—for he is an officer—I caught a glimpse of his uniform under his cloak. Make certain of it. I hope he is not dead."

Berthier rushed forward, bent over the body stretched across the street, and returned to tell the Emperor:

"Sire, it is the dark-faced captain who, in Spain, formed part of your staff. He joined on the morning of the Somo Sierra assault—and at Chamartin I sent him out on a reconnoissance toward the Escorial. I recognize him well enough, but I have forgotten his name."

"Fontenay—an American, recommended to me by the Empress, and I attached him to the Army of Aragon,

when I left Spain. How does he come to be in Paris?"

It seems to me that Marshal Lannes wrote to your majesty that he charged him to conduct General Palafox into France."

"Right! I remember! and the marshal has authorized him to come to Paris to be at my disposal. He is only wounded I trust?"

"I believe that is all, sire, but I greatly fear it is very severely."

"Have Yvan my first surgeon brought at once, and let him try to save the brave youth! It was my star which led him here this night. Give those fellows of Fouché the order not to leave him until Yvan's arrival—and let us get back. This is sad news to tell the Empress."

The policemen had taken good care not to approach Napoleon, and they had even pretended not to recognize him. This was the order given by the Duke d'Otranto; he had forbidden their obeying the Prince de Neufchatel, and they did so with intelligence. Two guarded poor Fontenay, who gave no token of life; two others went to identify their unfortunate comrade, killed on the spot, while the fifth ran for reinforcements at the nearest military guard-house or police-station.

The Emperor had reversed his course to re-enter the palace with Berthier.

Fouché's men, convinced they were only guarding two dead bodies, exchanged their reflections upon the event in an undertone.

"You will see that the master will not feel contented," observed an old sleuth-hound, in the force since the Directory. "He wants the Emperor shielded without his perceiving it. How puzzling that is!"

"It would not matter if we had grabbed the beggar who settled our unhappy Cabasson—a solid fellow, and one of the old hands! but if he is still running at that pace, he is far enough not to be caught."

"I do not know so much about that! the old boy nipped in good time the workers of the infernal machine, with no clue but one of the shoes of the horse that drew it. We have the cart this time and that's enough to leave a track!"

"Well, my idea is that we shall find nothing at all."

The fellow that made this attempt is a cunning one who will not linger in Paris. This will finish like the flare-up in November when the burglars got into the Empress' private rooms at la Malmaison. We had the description of one—the same sent to all the gendarmerie head-officers—it was known that he was a Spaniard, but with all this to help us, we never heard anything more about it."

"It might be the same—"

This professional dialogue was interrupted from two sides at once. Hand-barrows and porters came up at one end of the street at the same time as the imperial surgeon by the other. Yvan was not alone, as George de Prégny accompanied him.

Detained much longer at the Tuileries than he had expected, George was coming to learn if his friend had returned home, when in his street, he met the celebrated doctor of his acquaintance, who told him what had happened, without naming the victim. Vaguely agitated, George was eager to know who it was.

He almost choked with grief on seeing Paul Fontenay at his feet without voice and movement.

Much less affected, Yvan knelt down, felt the pulse and declared that the officer still breathed but that he could not pronounce his judgment on the consequences of the wound before close examination. He would have had him taken to a hospital.

Luckily George was present to point out Fontenay's house close by. Here he was carried on a litter, and one may imagine Tournesol's despair who believed he would never recover. Still he aided them to place him on the bed and undress him.

"He is stabbed a little below the right clavicle; it is grave," muttered the surgeon, shaking his head.

He probed the cut and sounded Paul's chest while George, paler than the patient, waited for the verdict under inexpressible anguish.

Remembering by their crossing of the Esplanade that his officer had strong vitality, Tournesol began to hope while George despaired.

At length, Yvan, packing up his instruments, came

away from the couch, and taking Prégny aside, he said to him:

"I do not believe he will come out of it. But all is possible—even a miracle. The Emperor has performed miracles on the battle-fields; why should not surgery do one? I am going to try. But I forewarn you that if your friend does not die, he will be compelled to keep his bed for a month without moving or speaking. Three inches of steel penetrated his chest, and the lung has been cut."

The assassin had struck more powerfully than Diego on the plain of Benavente, and this time, Marguerite's sashet had not turned or deadened the stroke.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TRAMMELS OF ETIQUETTE.

Yvan, Napoleon's celebrated surgeon, was a master in his art, and he was not often in error in his prognostics. The one he spoke in Paul Fontenay's case was verified in every point. Paul nearly died, but survived, though he had to pass more than a month like one merely existing. His youth and mainly the cares of his friend and his ordely saved him. George and Tournesol took turns to watch him day and night.

Every morning Yvan came to visit the wounded man and his prescriptions were scrupulously carried out.

When Fontenay, on recovering strength, opened his mouth to speak, George closed it with an entreaty for him not to say a word on pain of death, Yvan having stated that the least exertion might bring on a fatal internal bleeding. Of all the sufferings Paul underwent, perfect silence was certainly the most cruel to support. He had so many things to inquire about! His mind had stopped suddenly like a clock with its spring broken, on the evening when he fell on the Rue Saint Nicaise pavement, and since he regained consciousness he knew nothing of what transpired outside his room. George might have enlightened, but the surgeon had forbidden him. The least emotion might be fatal to the convalescent, and George, while divining his longing for news of Marguerite de Gavre, condemned himself to say only "All goes well!" or "Do not fret. I am only awaiting the doctor's consent to tell you the news."

The fixed delay was expiring when, one fine April day, Dr. Yvan announced that he would return no more. He did not say why—George knew—and he smilingly added:

"My dear captain, I exact from you only five days' patience. This is Sunday. I raise the restriction on Thursday next. Then you may speak, on condition you do not abuse the license, and I charge M. de Prégny to apply the curb! One of my brother physicians will complete the task of setting you in marching order, and you may go out when he authorizes it. That may still be some time, but you are saved. I have given the assurance to the Emperor, who has more than once asked after you. Hush!" he went on as Fontenay was about to reply, "do not thank me. You will fatigue yourself. Do so later, for I earnestly expect we shall see one another—this summer."

Upon this conclusion, the surgeon pressed his patient's hand and went out with no farther explanation. When gone, Fontenay implored his pitiless friend with his eyes.

"Thursday," rejoined George, "I will tell you all you like. Surely you can wait that little while I promise to communicate all that interests you. At present I do not mind declaring that I have no vexatious news."

Fontenay had to resign himself a little against his will, while George added that he might speak a few words next day to prepare the transition from complete muteness to sustained conversation. Short was the space for Paul to remain in ignorance of all things to which the great surgeon had condemned him while laying the balm upon him that the Emperor Napoleon was uneasy about his health. Truth to say, this was the least he could do after the tragedy in the Rue Saint Nicaise, but it was enough for the young West Indian to be profoundly grateful for not being forgotten.

Where was the Emperor?

On the eve of departure for the war against Austria, as rumor ran when Fontenay arrived in town? What was going on in Spain, where brave Captain Zolyncki remained? Not the slightest idea had the invalid, but he had not much fretted himself yet, as he had not once asked for a newspaper generally to instruct him. Besides, newspapers were few at that era, and young officers rarely read them. The head-quarters bulletins announcing victories sufficed.

The four days of supplementary silence, imposed by the doctor, passed swiftly.

Fontenay began to eat with an appetite, walk in his room, and even rest by the window to inhale the spring-time air of gentle April, bringing fine weather exceptionally in this year. In the narrow and gloomy street, much was not visible, but convalescents are delighted with a single sunbeam.

George strained his wits to amuse his friend without touching on subjects that might cause emotion, and Paul had made it a rule to reply with monosyllables. All went on marvelously to the long-looked-for Thursday, the end of this singular fast from speech. Fontenay had promised not to give himself a surfeit in breaking it, and literally, he kept his word. He opened by assuring Prégny of his intention to listen rather than talk. And Prégny asked leave to proceed methodically, from the least important news to the most interesting. The string of information would take long to uncoil, as Paul was nearly in the situation of a man who had slept five weeks.

"Perhaps you were astonished at our dear doctor's so abruptly ceasing his calls?" inquired George.

"Not very much—I rejoiced in it as a proof that he believed I was clear out of the affair," was Fontenay's reply.

"It was so, but there was another thing."

"What? had I offended him without meaning it?"

"He set out for Strasburg yesterday."

"And never told me! was it a secret?"

"A secret everybody knew, but he did not like to intrust it to you for fear of agitating you. Yvan precedes the Emperor, who leaves to-morrow with all his household."

"Oh," mournfully exclaimed Paul, "war is declared, and I shall not be in it!"

"You would, if you could ride. But you will require rest for a month—or two."

"Is Vergoncey going?"

"Like the others."

"Did he not trouble to call on me before going?"

"I was speaking to him of you just now. Let me first

relate what has happened at the palace while you were pinned down to your bed."

"I have been decried to the Emperor?" hastily asked Fontenay.

"One man alone vehemently assailed you. Can you guess?"

"Not at all."

"The Duke d' Otranto. I wonder what you have done to him for him to hate you to such a degree."

"I will tell you. He solicited me to act as a spy. I declared that I would not be a police hack, and thereupon—"

"Well, he had you followed when you left his offices. One of the two spies he set on you was killed by the man who wounded you; the other has stated that at the time of your coming out of a Palais Royal gaming house he separated from his mate to study a person whom you were trying to join—that he lost trace of him under the wooden galleries, but swears he is the same who, a little later and after a change of dress, was waiting for the Emperor in the Rue Saint Nicaise to stab him."

"But he stabbed only me and a spy of Fouché's. Do they dare to accuse me of being his accomplice?"

"Not openly; but Fouché asserts that your conduct is inexplicable. He says he has the proof that this blundering assassin is the burglar la Malmaison—the occult chief of the Spanish rising—Mlle. de Gavre's next of kin. He censures you for letting him escape at Bayonne and not having him arrested when you caught him in the gaming saloon. In short, he has omitted nothing to injure you, but I believe he mainly seeks to ruin our kind Empress. All means are good for him to attain his end—Napoleon's resolve to be divorced. If she were not interested in you he would leave you in repose, while as it is, you must expect to be watched, dogged, slandered—"

"Am I already defamed, in the Emperor's mind?"

"No; he has not forgotten that you exposed your life to save his—and he will never forget it."

"But still he distrusts me," bitterly replied Fontenay. "One day he will learn the truth, but it will be too

late, and while awaiting justice to be done me, I have no course but to go back and be killed in Spain."

He was in inexpressible agitation. George felt that he had been too clumsy in telling of the danger without preparing him, and he hastened to soothe him.

"You always exaggerate *à l'Américaine*," he said, "and you take the situation much too tragically. It certainly is a pity that you have the Duke d'Otranto against you; but, I repeat, you have Napoleon for you. He knows what Fouché is and he does not let anybody influence him. Yvan has told you that the Emperor has asked many times after you—a proof you are not in disgrace. The Emperor could not do more unless he came to see you—and you know that etiquette opposes that step—a sovereign must not call on a subject. Besides, between ourselves," added George, smiling, "yours are not the rooms in which to receive a crowned head!"

"Oh, I do not ask for so much! If I were only sure of remaining on the army roll—"

"Why not? you have not undeserved it; that I know. Your behavior in Spain was much remarked. The Emperor does not think of depriving himself of the services of a promising officer for the sole reason that this officer unfortunately displeases his police chief. You will miss the Austrian campaign this year. You will have many another occasion, for I fear that this war will not be our last. Therefore, distress yourself no more, and let us speak of other matters."

"What is said in Paris about the new attempt in the Rue Saint Nicaise?"

"Nothing, because it is not known. There is no wish for the public to know that a man tried to assassinate the Emperor. Those in the secret, like Berthier, Yvan and I, received the order to keep silent."

"Good! but the police must have made a quest?"

"Managed very secretly, and to no end."

"Then this Montalvan, granting he is the man—"

"He has again vanished, and it is supposed he went back into Spain."

"Incredible! Where did he hide when in Paris?"

"It is perfectly unknown. Fouché asserts that he had French accomplices who gave him harbor, which is pos-

sible enough. The Emperor has two kinds of enemies: first, the Jacobins who never forgive him for suppressing their Republic, and the Chouans who want to put their king on the throne. Fouché starts on these bases to accuse everybody."

"But I come from America where there are neither Jacobins nor Chouans. The Empress has the same origin and knows it well."

"So he takes care not to accuse you plainly. He only ventures insinuations which I repeat to you find no credence."

"I want to believe this, because you say so, but if mud enough be thrown, some will stick."

"The chief thing is that those who love you will not believe it."

"Those?—you alone hold me dear."

"There are several others" retorted the auditor.

"Then the Empress Josephine—"

"She is indignant at the proceedings of Otranto, and said so to the Emperor. Since you were wounded, not a day has passed without her sending for news of you. Yesterday I replied that you were out of danger and would soon go outdoors."

"Will she consent to receive me?"

"On her return, certainly."

"What return?"

"She is going off to-morrow morning with the Emperor."

"She is going!" sadly exclaimed the creole.

"To Strasburg, where she will stay until peace is signed."

"Alas this is the last blow!"

George seemed to feel a wicked pleasure in seeing his friend shake and shiver without daring to utter the question upon his lips.

"Does she take her household, too?" finally inquired Paul.

"All. She will hold her court at Strasburg while the Emperor marches upon Vienna. She will receive visits from her daughter, the queen of Holland, with her children; her sister-in-law, the queen of Westphalia, and her cousin, the grand duchess of Baden. This will be

the counterpart of the assemblage at Erfurt last year, except that it will be a gathering of all the queens—not of kings?"

"Will this be for long?"

"That is hard to foretell. The Empress, who is very unwell, will go to take the waters at Plombières. She will not return to the capital before the end of the war."

Fontenay was silent; tears stood in his eyes—guessing why, George had pity upon him.

"What you wish to know is if Mlle. de Gavre will be of the traveling-party?" he smilingly said. "How else could it be? The Empress cannot do without her."

"Nor I!" muttered Paul.

"I am certain that you will see her again—perhaps sooner than you think."

"Yet I cannot go after her to Strasburg! You have broken my heart. Why did you not begin by saying that she was going away?"

"Because I stated that I was going to proceed in order. I reserved the great news for the end."

"Say, the bad news. This drives me to despair."

"You despair too quickly. In proof of that, I hasten to add, Mlle. Gavre is more fond of you than ever."

"You told me so—you wrote me so, in Spain; you repeated it on the day of my arrival here in town, and all I ask is to believe it, but I should be more sure if I could see her."

"So you might, at the Tuileries, if you had not been wounded. She was expecting you after I heralded you, and she was cruelly disappointed."

"But has she not had any idea of calling?"

"Here, on you! Oh, you free and unfettered Americans! in the first place, you forget that the surgeon forbade any visits. This one of hers would have so excited you that you would have died."

"During the first days, perhaps, when I wavered between life and death, but since I have regained my strength—"

"A young French lady could not come here. You are a bachelor and your united ages is not forty years."

"Oh, you prudish French, I say! But I am her betrothed!"

"All the more reason for her not to compromise herself. I do not doubt that she has a keen desire to trample on conventional rules to see you, but she is not free, as she is under the Empress' guardianship; and the Empress would never allow her to commit such imprudence."

"She could dispense with her consent," persisted the West Indian.

"Come here in secret! You cannot think of it! it would be even worse."

"I do not understand anything about your conventional rules in France. What, here we two are, betrothed! At Chamartin you delivered to me on her behalf a keepsake which I have always worn on my heart from that day, and yet for fear of giving a foundation for the evil sayings of fools, she holds back from seeing me! If these are the regulations of the society where she lives, I do not understand her submitting to them. She need not come actually alone—"

"Very well! with whom, in that case? with her lady's maid?"

As Fontenay was silent the Frenchman pursued:

"You are never going to suggest that the Empress should leave her palace in mask and mantle to accompany her reading-lady to the Rue Saint Nicaise?"

"Let me tell you that in Martinique, she has come to my mother's house more than once."

"When she was plain Mlle. de Tascher. Now she is Empress of France, and no longer at liberty to follow the impulse of her heart. But I maintain that it has not altered. She is ever the good-hearted Josephine and thinks of nothing but making people happy. She would be miserable if she caused pain even to a stranger, and for you and for Mlle. de Gavre she entertains indubitable affection. Do not again accuse her of forgetting you; trust her to insure happiness to both of you, and—who can tell? time may soon show that she busies herself on your account."

While thus discoursing to cheer Paul, not so easily consoled, the auditor of the state council had risen from his chair and walked up and down. It was splendid

weather and he paused to look for an instant into the street through the opened window

"Will you see her this evening?" abruptly inquired Fontenay

"I do not believe she is receiving this evening. The departure takes place in the early morning."

"Then you cannot ask what is to become of me. I shall not even know if the Emperor has placed me anywhere."

"I dare say you will be notified before his departure."

"Heaven grant it, for I would rather die than linger in all this uncertainty. But what are you hanging out of window about? do you perceive a dispatch-bearer with an order for me?"

"No, I am looking at your orderly who stands sentry before your door. I set him there, with the order to allow nobody to intrude."

"Oh, make yourself easy! nobody will come. I am as deep in oblivion as though I had been killed at Somo Sierra, like the brave Pole who saved my life. He is better off than I! he is no longer in pain."

"My dear Paul," said the other gayly, "you have too bad an opinion of men—and women. Those whom you doubt have no cause for self-reproach, and you will repent having misjudged them. You will acknowledge your wrong-doing before five minutes are over."

Upon this prediction, George closed the window.

Understanding nothing of this enigmatical speech, the American wondered why he had been so suddenly deprived of fresh air by the shutting of the sashes. But he had other cares than this to learn about, and he fell back into his meditation far from mirthful. He was roused from it by the squeaking of the door on its unoiled hinges, and he turned his head to see who entered, but solely under the impression that it was Tournesol whom George had beckoned to come upstairs. It was not Tournesol. It was a woman in hood and cloak, and she was followed by a taller one, also in hooded cloak.

He rose, stupor-stricken, in an attitude so respectful that it was a proclamation of the visitress' rank.

"The Empress!" he murmured, pale with emotion.

CHAPTER XXV.

INSEPARABLE!

The captain dared not utter the name of Marguerite, although he had at the same time recognized her.

Josephine was a trifle thinner since he saw her at la Malmaison, but she was still entrancing; her young companion was, however, fairer and more winsome than ever.

Fontenay quickly forgot his friend's arguments so exhaustively demonstrating that a sovereign cannot enter the humble lodgings of a wounded officer, but not before perceiving that the language had been used to make him more highly value the imperial visit.

"I see," said Josephine, looking at the two gentlemen, "that M. de Prégny has been guarded. He promised me not to warn you, my dear Paul, and he has kept his promise, for I mark how my visit surprises you."

"It overwhelms me with gladness and gratitude," muttered the West Indian, so agitated that he could hardly speak.

"You will see that I have not come alone," continued the Empress, taking Mlle. de Gavre by the hand.

She put this trembling hand in the captain's, and this one trembled no less.

Had Napoleon been there, he would doubtlessly have scolded Josephine, but he would have been moved; all the more, perchance, from his seeing the time draw near when the necessity was imposed on him of parting from the companion of his glorious youth—the sweet and affectionate woman who had been his good angel.

"My not coming sooner," she said, "is due to Yvan's prohibition, but I was determined not to go away without seeing you; and as you had not obtained permission to go out, I decided to do what was forbidden you.

There is some merit in it, for it was not easy, particularly this day. If you only knew the difficulty I have had in leaving the palace *incognito*! However I have succeeded, but I have very little time to give you. If I am belated here, my absence will be remarked—perhaps it has been remarked by this, for I am persuaded that the odious Fouché sets spies upon me. But I shall tell Napoleon at Strasburg all that is burdening my heart and prove that this man is his evil genius."

Prégny was the only one who lent an attentive ear to Josephine's words. Hand in hand, Paul and Marguerite were no longer listening. Josephine perceived this and laughingly said:

"I forgot you were in love with each other and would be eager to learn what I have done for you. Well, your marriage is arranged. I spoke of it to the Emperor, who does not oppose it. He even promised to sign the contract, after the peace. His sole condition is that Paul shall not leave the army."

"Then he does not think of breaking my career?" blunderingly uttered Fontenay.

"What are you talking about? Who could have made you believe that he was dissatisfied with your services? He does not take you with him to-morrow because you are not yet fit to mount a horse. His staff is complete; the campaign will be short, and you cannot take part in it, but he does not intend you remaining idle. He has left orders concerning you at the war ministry's, and as soon as you are completely recovered from your wound, it will depend upon yourself alone about winning another grade in Spain. This is the advice I give you, my dear fellow-countryman, and I read in Marguerite's eyes that she will approve your following it."

"I will start in a week," said Paul, electrified by a glance from the young lady.

"Nay, nay that would be too soon. You must first finish your restoration. But I see that I have clearly appreciated you, and I am proud of you. I armed you as a knight at la Malmaison and you have handsomely won your spurs. Now, when you have the right to repose, you still prefer glory! Marguerite's father died

on the field of honor. She can only marry a brave man. I shall be happy to unite you."

The girl was silent but her eyes spoke, and Fontenay read in them that she agreed with her protectress.

"Allow me to add," proceeded the latter, after a pause, "that you may write to each other while awaiting the wedding-day. Marguerite will give me news of you, as she will not leave me. She will accompany me to the watering-place, if I go there, and return with me to Saint Cloud where I pass the summer, until the Emperor's return.

M. de Prégny is one of my faithful servants. I shall often see him and we will speak about you, my dear Paul, as often we have done since your departure. Through him I knew of your adventures in that dreadful Spanish land, and your efforts to recover Marguerite's property. You did not succeed, and I hope, like her, that you will not again risk your life to wrest that fortune from the villain who despoiled her. That would be paying too dear for it, and Marguerite may dispense with it for I undertake to endow her. But I am in the belief that M. de Prégny has not told me all the story."

"All I know, your majesty," replied the auditor. "In December, I spent a morning with Paul at Chamartin and one hour here on the day of his arrival in Paris. There was no time to relate the entire story of the dangers he escaped."

"Atrocious warfare, is it not?" inquired Josephine.

"Yes, indeed, your majesty! and yet," added Fontenay to lead up to a question he had strong desire to put to his betrothed, "I have witnessed some touching scenes. There was one above all, when we entered Saragossa, just after the capitulation. The priests were insufficient to pray for the dead placed in open biers around the Virgen del Pilar Cathedral. Kneeling women were lamenting. This was not war, and I was profoundly affected. I forgot that the dead they wept over had fallen fighting against us in defense of their country—I only thought of the grief of these mothers, widows and orphans and I wished to relieve them—"

"You have a noble heart!" exclaimed the Empress, with tears in her eyes. "Marguerite also has wept for

the father slain on a field of battle," she observed, "and I am sure that at Saragossa you thought of her."

"Everywhere! but the sight under my eyes there," went on Paul, looking at the girl, "perturbed me the more from one of the mourners resembling her in every feature. I could have mistaken her for Mlle. de Gavre, although she was a little older, and I would like to know if there were any link of parentage between them."

"I have no relatives now in Spain," replied Marguerite.

"You are forgetting that one remains, my dear Marguerite," said Josephine; "this cousin-german of your mother, who seized upon your ready money—this Blas de Montalvan, your enemy and ours."

"I have been told this; I have never seen him."

"None of us has seen him, except your betrothed, Captain Fontenay, whom the scoundrel has attempted twice to murder. But, after his first attempt in Malmaison park, I have seen information collected for the Duke d'Otranto about this odious character and I clearly remember it all. He is a count, and performed high functions in the court of King Carlos IV.; he married a lady as noble as himself; she died, leaving a daughter who married an officer—a colonel, I believe, who served in Spain in the Walloon Guards; he was fifteen years older than his wife."

"The dead man whom I saw in his coffin at Saragossa, wore a foreign uniform," remarked Fontenay.

"That widow may be your cousin, my dear Marguerite," concluded the Empress; "but what does it matter? You are half French through your father and you will become wholly so by your marriage. I hope that Paul will never again find this Count de Montalvan on his path. I confess that his daughter does not interest me; I can only pity her and wish her father should bring her no evil fortune."

The noble lady could not speak more nobly, and Fontenay regretted having mentioned this episode of his sojourn in Spain, for he perceived that he had chagrined Marguerite, far from flattered by this resemblance with the daughter of an enemy of France and the Emperor.

"Farewell, my dear Paul," resumed Josephine, "or, rather, may we soon meet again! I endeavor to encour-

age you upon your future; my own is somber. God grant that it may brighten! Pray for me; Marguerite and I will pray for you!"

The good Empress stopped from her voice failing her. She held out her hand to the young captain who respectfully kissed it, and to conceal her tears, she departed, leaning on the arm of her reader, who did not try to conceal her own.

An Empress must not be escorted to the door as one would a lady not of title, and one must not offer her a chair when she enters. Josephine had remained standing and the American had not committed the fault indicated. He did not commit that of accompanying her down the narrow stairway up which she had condescended to mount to see him. The intelligent Tournesol guarded the door in the street.

From having lived a great deal in the palace, George de Prégny was versed in etiquette, and he had not made an improper step. He did not seem at ease over the consequences of this excursion beyond the palace.

"I hope she will not have to repent having come here," he muttered. "She will have been spied upon and her enemies may use this visit to calumniate her. I was forewarned, and I tried to turn her aside from it, but she is so kind that she was fixed upon showing you this token of interest."

"Happily!" exclaimed Paul, "I should have died of pining and disquietude, and she resuscitated me. Oh, now I can go away easy in assurance of my wedding Marguerite! I have won two steps in Spain and mean to gain the cross this time! 'Return a captain and decorated,' the Empress said to me at la Malmaison, as you may remember; the project shall be fulfilled, and there will be no need of my reminding her of the promise."

"Oh, no! she has the memory of the heart, and your fiancée will no sooner forget you; I answer for it who know her nature."

"Better than I do, assuredly, for I had not seen her since November last, and she did not speak a word to me this time."

"The Empress did the speaking for her. But all the winter in the palace how many times she spoke of you!

You may believe from me that she loves you truly and passionately, for General de Gavre was a hero, and his child is no commonplace woman. You saw that she never blanched when Josephine advised your returning into Spain; yet heaven knows what she suffered while you were risking your life there every day! The noble girl understands that a French officer's place is where the battle goes on."

"I might be fighting in Austria—"

"Not when you are in no fit state to keep the saddle. The Emperor starts to-morrow. This spring you can only go to war in Spain; it succeeded very well with you before, as you obtained a brilliant promotion; you did not pay too dearly for it by a couple of wounds less serious than this one nearly terminating your career in the peaceful city."

"I ask but to go!"

"I only want you to bear in mind that this Montalvan has stolen the fortune of your betrothed. I believe she has washed her hands of it, as they say vulgarly. But if you manage to make the uncle disgorge, I believe that the Empress will also be glad."

"Do you think that he has really returned into his infernal country?"

"I suspect so, and heaven grant that he never comes out of it. It is not impossible that you will be face to face with him again, for you are destined to serve in the Army in Valencia and Aragon."

"How do you know that?"

"The minister for war, General Clarke, told me so in the Empress' court yesterday. He was not ignorant of my being your friend and he wanted me to have the pleasure of imparting the good news. I was going to repeat it when the Empress came in."

"Then I am going back again on Marshal Lannes' staff?"

"Not so. All has changed there in the month during which our dear Yvan shut you up in quarantine. The Duke de Montebello is on the way to rejoin the Emperor on the other side of the Rhine, remitting his command to General Suchet—become nephew you know, by alliance to King Joseph. He is sent into Spain to win his

marshal's staff-of-office. His commission is to conquer Valencia and at the same time he will direct the military operations in Aragon. I leave you to guess how sorely he will require officers and how many chances you will have to distinguish yourself."

"Do you mean to say the taking of Saragossa did not complete the conquest of the province?"

"Oh, it is conquered, in the sense of the towns being ours; pacified, 'tis another affair! the guerrillas overrun all the country-side, and to admit the truth, we are only masters of the points we occupy."

"On the whole, all goes badly."

"Very badly, since the Emperor is no longer there. Our generals do not agree together, from their common jealousy. It is hoped that Suchet will improve our standing, anything but firm."

"I must not say I am glad to hear it, though I am pleased to hear that I will not be idle there."

"Would I could go to see you, as I did at Chamartin! Unfortunately, if I have the luck to carry the state council portfolio, it will be to Vienna they will send me."

"You appear to believe that the Emperor will soon be in Vienna?"

"In a month—maybe sooner. It will be a repetition of the campaign of Austerlitz, and I hope that Napoleon will this time treat Austria in such a way as to give her no idea of renewing the strife! I hope," he added, shaking his head, "that she will not get out of the difficulty by offering the hand of one of her archduchesses."

"Is it true, then, that he thinks of divorce?"

"Too true—unfortunately for him, for us, and for France, for I foresee that it will be the end of his successes. Still I hope that he will give up the fatal project. He does not wish to break the heart of the only woman he ever loved, and whom he loves still—but he must have an heir to establish his empire. He may, however, decide on adopting Prince Eugene. But let us drop this sad subject, my dear Paul. The Empress bids me tell you not to trouble about the outlay for your new campaign, as she has provided everything. You will be the best horsed, equipped and monetarily provided cap-

tain in the Army of Valencia and Aragon. I suppose you purpose taking your orderly with you?"

"I believe you! do without Tournesol? never!"

"I can understand it, from my having learnt in this month what the man is worth. He has looked after you with admirable devotedness, and we are now a brace of friends. What do you think when I tell you that I spoke of him to the Empress, who, I wager, has made him the present of a full purse, as she went out?"

"She is so good and generous!"

"She knows all the services he did for you in Spain and does not wish him to leave you."

"Oh, he has no desire. He is attached to me like a dog to his master."

"I do not doubt that, but I am instructed on matters not known to you. I have become his confidant. Our brave Tournesol has no secrets from me; and the other day, he hinted that he greatly pleased a young, good-looking widow who keeps the grocery near here; he made her acquaintance in buying sugar for your potions, and it looks as if he had only to say the word to marry her."

"The mischief! if he marries, I should be puzzled to find his like. Did he tell you he intended to settle down?"

"No! but this grocery keeper is so good a match for a man who has no property outside his saber and his boots, that—"

At this juncture, Tournesol opened the room-door a little and joyfully shouted:

"Oh, let me tell you, captain, the lady gave me twenty-five napoleons! I never saw so many in a purse before!"

"Do you know who it is?" abruptly challenged Fontenay.

"Well, captain, I pretended not to recognize her; but I did know her all the same. None but the Empress would fill a poor cuirassier's hand with gold, and he not asking her for anything. I did not mean to tell you about it, but I could not keep it in!"

"She came to let me know that the ministry of war sends me back into Spain."

"That just suits me, captain. You are cured, and I was beginning to tire of Paris."

"I fancied that you wanted to remain."

"Leave you to go into that dog's own country alone! Why, captain, what have I done to make you think that of me?"

"I was told that you were courting a lady of the neighborhood—"

"Pélagie, the grocer's widow round the corner? It is true that I have a liking for her. I am not handsome and I am as thin as a spike, but a man is gilded thickly with glory when he has served in the 13th Cuirassiers," said Tournesol, laughing and twirling his mustache.

"Well, why not marry her? she is rich."

"And I had not a penny before the Empress's gift! Well, later on, when I am honorably discharged and you are a general, if the grocery-keeper is still ready to replace her late lamented husband with Jean Tournesol, I do not say I shall refuse to make her happy; but, as sure as I am a heavy cavalry man! I will stay with you, captain, as long as you like to keep me; Pélagie will have to wait."

The two gentlemen exchanged a glance. Both admired the veteran's disinterested outburst; without hesitation or flourishes, he proclaimed that he would not quit his officer for ease and rest in his old days.

"Come, come," said Fontenay, keenly affected, "you are an honest fellow! We shall not part company. I shall take you to Spain on condition that, if we return, you will invite me to your wedding."

He dared not speak of his own, although he no longer doubted his future. The good Empress' words and Marguerite's glances had wound up his heart to go on forever again! He was eager to start for Spain where he had all but left his lifeless body.

He did not foresee that the dangers previously encountered there were trifles compared to those awaiting him!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OFFER OF LIFE.

Paul Fontenay's convalescence took longer than he expected. All danger was over, but strength only slowly returned, and if he had not been so young, he never would have recovered from the gash in his chest. In five weeks, however, after the Empress' departure, the captain could go on the road into Spain.

The end of his Parisian stay was as calm as the outset had been otherwise. Fouché's agents no longer watched him, a proof that the minister of police had sought simply to ensnare the Empress Josephine in trying to compromise him. Since she was in Strasburg beyond his power, he paid no heed to the officer whom she favored.

Paul passed his time in strolls with George de Prégny, and nothing was absent for his happiness, as Marguerite had written to him three times, letters not a little contributing to accelerate his cure. Affection pierced through the reserve which her position imposed upon her. He replied in terms overflowing with creole passionateness.

This sweet correspondence did not make him forget the war with which he was about to renew acquaintance under agreeable conditions—in other words in Suchet's army, with its head-quarters in Saragossa, and admirably furnished through the generosity of his imperial patroness.

Tournesol had had a share in it. His fine new uniform heightened his martial mien and achieved fully the conquest of the sensitive Pélagie. Formal promise of marriage was made between him and the well-to-do widow, on the condition that it should be after the campaign.

The news from Germany was excellent. The Emperor

had already beaten the enemy at Abensberg, Eckmühl and Ratisbon, and had entered Vienna on the 12th of May, exactly a month from his departure from the Tuileries. Everything presaged that this triumphal march would soon finish with a brilliant victory.

Fontenay had no time to lose if he meant to win in Spain that cross of honor which Josephine wished to see sparkle on his breast on the day when he led Marguerite to the altar.

On the 22nd of May, the young captain set out with the faithful Tournesol, after bidding farewell to George de Prégny, without dreaming that, at the same hour as he stepped into the carriage to go to Bayonne, Marshal Lannes, under whose orders he had served, fell mortally wounded by an Austrian cannon-ball on the battle-field of Essling.

No accident disturbed the long journey from Paris to Saragossa over the road he had traveled homeward after the siege. Again he saw the defile where a guerrilla had attacked his party, and Tudela where an over-zealous commander had saluted Palafox with an unseasonable cannonade.

But all was changed in the country. A blazing sun scorched the mountains, seen by him covered with frost, and the Ebro valley where he had splashed under torrential rains.

It was another Spain, and Fontenay, overpowered by heat where he had shivered, understood the accuracy of the popular saying about a Madrid year: "Three months' winter, nine months' *inferno*."

From a military point of view, however, matters had not ameliorated. The French held Aragon, and the regular Spanish armies had melted away like the snows of their Sierras, but the open warfare had been succeeded by that of ambush, and the invader could not win at this. The soldiers captured towns which the insurgents did not try to defend, and the latter re-entered them as soon as the victors marched out to another point threatened by the irregulars. At this game of "Keep Jack alive!" as children say, the French troops were rapidly used up.

Though strongly garrisoned, Saragossa contained a population which tremulously awaited only the news of a

severe check to the enemy's generals, to break out in revolt.

Here Fontenay found Suchet to greet him paternally. He was an already illustrious leader who was soon to conquer and almost pacify the ancient kingdom of Valencia, where he won, in two years after, his dukedom of Albufera. Suchet did not employ the new-comer on his staff, but that was because he wished to do so more usefully. He advised him to take part in the movements of the flying columns, incessantly hunting the insurgent bands. Fontenay would learn his profession better thus than in writing out orders or even in carrying them. This pleased Fontenay, as he had not returned into Spain so much to wield the pen as the sword.

One of these flying columns was at the heels of Villacampa, the most famous partisan leader of the province. Its operations were at this period in the Guadalaviar Valley, and when Fontenay learned that it was formed of a battalion of the 14th line regiment, a Polish battalion and two squadrons of the 13th Cuirassiers, he blessed the general for literally making him "at home" until he should be called back beside him to march upon Valencia.

Fontenay could not contain his joy. He was going again to see his companions-in-arms of the terrible siege, share their dangers, and fight anew in the ranks of that valiant Vistula Legion where he counted none but friends. He would find Zolnycki, brave and kind, and perhaps even Commandant Carénac, the adversary become his friend.

The young captain was not alone delighted.

Tournesol also had left friends in the Polish Legion and he was so enchanted that he almost forgot the tender Pélagie.

All their hopes were realized. On the upper Guadalaviar they joined the column; it had just routed Villacampa's bands and hurled them back into the Albarracin Sierra.

They were feasted. Zolnycki almost squeezed Fontenay breathless in his arms, and as provisions happened for once to abound in the camp, that night officers and soldiers toasted the happy return of the old friends.

The expedition was touching its end.

The officers of the Vistula Legion related to Fontenay, who was agreeably surprised to hear it, that this bivouac was only two leagues from Teruel where the column was to stay. Fontenay knew the topography scantily of this rough country, and he had not dreamt that Providence had led him, as by the hand, to the town he despaired of ever seeing.

Teruel! here was born Marguerite and mother; here the dread Tio dwelt; here he may have hidden the memorable casket stolen from la Malmaison; here, peradventure, slumbered the legendary treasure of the Seguras.

The creole entered it next day with the Poles and the 14th Foot Battalion, but in three weeks he did not find even a clue to what he sought.

The garrison had a happy time, as Teruel was then one of the principal towns of Aragon; pleasantly located on a hill, bathed at its base by the Guadalaviar's waters, rich in monumental edifices, and sufficiently well fortified to defy a sudden attack, an advantage well appreciated by the French who had taken possession without resistance.

This was not precisely what our young war-hawk had dreamt of. Idleness soon weighed upon him; yet it threatened to be prolonged, for the insurgents did not show themselves in the valley, and General Suchet having gone with his main body toward Valencia, no order for undertaking fresh expeditions might be expected.

The soldiers did not complain about this, as the last one had been fruitful and they were enjoying the results. They had secured provisions of all kinds and had never lived in greater luxury since they foraged in Aragon. All reveled; and while the officers caroused in the finest mansions "requisitioned" for their lodgings, their men regaled in the public squares on luscious roasts and fine wine brought from Albarracin, where they had leave to fill their knapsacks and load the mules following the column.

It is easy to believe that the inhabitants of Teruel did not take any part in these feasts or in the vanquisher's glee. They did not show themselves in the public ways, and the only open stores were the confectioners, the *confetarias* or confit-makers' taking the place of coffee-houses

or cafés, almost unknown then in minor Spanish towns; here were sold stale pastry, chocolate and ice-water. One stood not far from the church where is exhibited the tomb of the famous Lovers of Teruel. It was also near Fontenay's lodging and the American would sometimes come to sit down in it, far more from having nothing else to do and to dream of his hopes, than to feast.

This melancholy house was kept by a tall, bearded Spaniard, whom the captain could not esteem altogether unfamiliar. He was assuredly not the Tio, but he was not any better looking. He wore rather the aspect of a bandit than a sweetmeat-maker, and was not more engaging in manner than in countenance.

Moreover, his reputation was that of a fierce hater of the French, and Tournesol asserted that some day he would stuff the officers who patronized his den, with poisoned cakes. Like the others, the creole laughed at his orderly's suspicions and continued his daily visits to Don Angel's *confeteria*. The pastry-cook had nothing angelic about him save his name, and his attendance—like angel's visits, so far as it was not regular; he did not appear every day in his dark shop like a spider's hole. When absent, he left the guard of the establishment to an ugly old woman, who answered to the sweet name of Carmen; her repulsive appearance would have put a whole squadron of heavy dragoons to flight. It was certainly not to pay his addresses to her that Fontenay dropped into the confectioner's. When she was asked the whereabouts of her master, she would invariably answer with a "*Non saber, Senor,*" in a tone so surly that nobody ever persisted.

None of the garrison knew where Don Angel took his walks abroad so mysteriously every two or three days, repeated eclipses which finally attracted the attention of an old superior officer commanding the place. He strongly suspected him of slipping out of town to give intelligence of what occurred to the bands hidden in the Sierras, and he only waited for a chance to have him arrested.

In spite of this, Don Angel continued frequently to disappear, without Tournesol, who kept an eye upon him, being able to discover how he stole out or returned without being seen.

The store was on the ground floor of a rather large

house belonging to the confectioner; no doubt there was a secret issue.

Fontenay little perturbed himself about these movements and at length ceased to cudgel his brains to trace the haunting resemblance. He had other cares. It was Blas de Montalvan whom he wished to find, and he had more than once inquired about one whose name ought to be known in Teruel. The natives questioned in their own tongue, assumed an amazed air, pretended to search in their recollections and finally declared that they had never heard this nobleman spoken of.

When Fontenay asked if any Seguras still existed in Terual, they never failed to answer him: "Oh, senor, Isabella de Segura lived in the time of King Don Jayme and she never had any offspring, having died on the wedding-night. Her tomb is in San Pedro's church, and if you honor wishes to see it," etc., etc.

In lying at this rate they were plainly obeying an order, and the American remained convinced that they very well knew where Uncle Blas was, but would have been shot rather than tell it. He confided his tribulations to Zolnycki and the wise captain did not hide that he shared them.

"The good old drone who commands here," he said, "passes his time in drawing up reports, instead of acting. We are very badly guarded. The guerrilleros do not show themselves because they await the nick to take us by surprise. They are in communication with the town's-people, who yearn to rise against us. They are in relations with Villacampa who watches us. Some fine night, we will all be massacred and they will retake Teruel."

The junior captain could not contradict Zolnycki, thinking the same, and he began seriously to fear that his prediction would be accomplished. That same day Tournesol held much the same language to him, saying, as he was going out:

"Captain, I do not know what these Spaniards are hatching this morning. They are out and all over the streets, and holding meetings at the corners. My idea is that they are preparing some ugly trick."

You may not be wrong," muttered Fontenay.

"I should not be astonished if it were to-night. This is market-day and more countrymen have come in than I have seen since we were here first. They are not too proud to skulk in the cellars and pop up on a given signal to fall on the guard at the gates while Villacampa's brigands attack on the outside."

Tournesol's conjecture was so likely that his captain questioned himself as to his duty of going straight to warn this commandant whom Zolnycki accused of wasting time in scribbling on report-forms. A singular motive prevented him hurrying there. Of all the faculties of the human intelligence, the most capricious is certainly the memory. It awakens and slumbers suddenly without any reason.

For three weeks Fontenay had been wondering who Don Angel resembled, without succeeding. Suddenly he recalled him without any event casting light into his mind.

This was the man who, six months previously, had served as his guide in the streets of Madrid and had so strangely disappeared with Blas de Montalvan on coming out of the bank. He no longer wore the Spanish shaped whiskers, and letting his beard grow had so changed him that Fontenay had not recognized him on seeing him at Teruel.

What had he come here to do? Evidently, to further some sinister design of Montalvan, who would not be remote.

Before all, the captain wished to have firm ground to go upon. If the revolt was to burst that night, he still had time to go into the confeteria, and seize Angel, if there, and drag him before the governor, who would know how to make him divulge.

He told Tournesol to go indoors and wait there for him. Though astonished a little by this order, Tournesol knew nothing but passive obedience; he obeyed, and in the following five minutes the officer stood before the confectioner's.

It was open, but empty. Neither master nor the woman were in, but, on lifting his eyes along the front, Fontenay caught a glimpse of a woman through the bars of a *mirador*, or peephole, at a first floor window.

If there were one there, she disappeared instantly.

Therefore the house was inhabited. He had not suspected it, but he had not come to exchange ogling glances with an Aragonese senorita. So he rushed in like a hurricane of his native seas and began to hammer on the counter with his saber-hilt. This noisy summons was heard, for a shrill voice from above answered in Spanish, "Coming!" and soon the hag came down a winding staircase at the far end of the saloon.

"Senor Angel is not at home," snarled she with her customary manner, that of a dog guarding a door and showing his teeth.

"I suspected as much," returned the captain, "and that you would tell me you did not know if I asked you. Now show me this house from top to bottom."

"But, senor, nobody is here; I swear it on my lot in paradise."

"You lie! Your master is probably here, and if not, a woman is! I saw her on the balcony and I mean to speak with her."

"Impossible, senor. If Don Angel were to learn it—"

"He would wring your neck, very likely, but if you refuse to go upstairs with me I shall go without you. So, stand aside for me to pass?!"

"Holy powers! how violent you are! oh, you French gentlemen!" sighed the duenna, giving way.

Looking at the officer, she mumbled the Spanish proverb signifying "the best key for all doors is a golden one."

Fontenay understood and dropped into the dreadful creature's claw a pinch of Napoleons which she pocketed without scruple, although the pieces were struck with the image of the conqueror execrated by the Spanish. Without saying a word, she preceded him up the stairs but not before taking the precaution to bolt the street door.

The captain followed her, not without anxiety as to whether she led to some death-trap, perhaps, for Don Angel might be hidden in his house. But with his sword by his side, our master of fence feared nobody.

The staircase ended on the first story. The duenna passed along a narrow lobby, led the officer up to a door

ajar, pushed him inside, whispering: "Senor, be cautious!" and softly closed it on him.

At first he saw nothing.

The room was lighted by only one window, supplied with thick iron bars rounding outwardly, to form a balcony jutting over the street. But his eyes soon grew accustomed to the twilight in the scantily furnished room, and he descried a woman standing in front of him. This unexpected discovery where he had looked for a foe, not altogether unworthy of his steel, put him in a bad temper and lowering his sword, he was about to address this suspicious stranger roughly when she spoke in pure Castilian:

"Do you not recognize me, senor?"

"No," replied the captain, "and I have no business with you. I am looking for the master of this house. I must find him, or else—"

"You had pity on me in Saragossa," proceeded the woman. "I hoped that you had not forgotten me."

The voice was sweet, a rarity in Spanish women. Fontenay fancied that this was not the first time he had heard it.

"Did not Carmen tell you I was here?" inquired the stranger.

"Carmen is your duenna, I suppose," sternly replied the captain; "she led me here because I paid her, and if I had known that rascal, Angel, was not here, I should not have entered."

The woman approached the window to place herself full in the light, and said:

"Look at me."

Fontenay could not restrain an exclamation of surprise, for he beheld the young widow last seen kneeling by the bier at the porch of the Lenora del Pilar, and he might believe he saw Marguerite from their striking likeness. "You did not expect to find me at Teruel?" she inquired.

"I did not—least of all, in this house."

"I came to avoid the French. This householder is my father's oldest and most faithful servant."

"Your father, the Count de Montalvan?"

"How do you know it?"

"He has tried three times to kill me."

"You? he does not know you."

"You mistake, lady. He knows that I am betrothed to a young lady whom he has deprived of property, and he hates me mortally."

"A young lady?"

"Mlle. de Gavre, whose mother was his cousin; you are her living portrait. Was it to deliver me to him that you had your duenna conduct me here?"

"It was to save you."

"Save me from what and from whom? I am in no danger with my sword in hand, and it depends on me to have this house surrounded by soldiers."

"Do so, senor. Your soldiers will find none but me."

"You are a woman, and I should not arrest you; but you can tell the scoundrel who gives you shelter that I shall not show him any mercy."

"He would not sue you for mercy. Pray to heaven rather that he may spare you! I meant to preserve you from the doom overhanging you. I remembered that at Saragossa you sympathized with me in my sorrow, when I prayed over the remains of my husband, slain by your soldiers' bullets. You might have owed life to me! but you threaten me and you insult my father. Your fate falls on your own head!"

This was said so proudly that the creole admired the courageous woman who could thus beard him when he had but to call the guards in for her arrest.

He also wondered on what she supported her prediction of his going to fall under the mercy of Angel, and he had not forgotten Tournesol's warnings.

Was a conspiracy, of which this man was the leader, about to come to a head? were the good folk of Teruel preparing in the shadow the massacre of the French garrison? was a miniature massacre of St. Bartholomew to be accomplished during the coming night?

The young widow had told him ample to put him on his guard, but he could not hope for her betraying the plotter's secrets to him so that he would know their proceedings to surprise their victims. The surest counter-plot was to block their plan by gathering the first soldiers of the Polish Legion or the 14th Foot seen in the street,

arresting her, and running to repeat to the commandant the imprudent words he had heard. But this measure was repugnant to him. This fiery patriot had intended to shield him from death, and he thought of paying her in the same coin. The rulers did not shrink from having women shot who fomented revolt, and if he pointed her out, she would be immediately tried by a court-martial and sent before the firing-party.

But if she were Montalvan's daughter, she was also the relative of Marguerite de Gavre.

Fontenay, who had forgiven the traitor Diego, might pardon the cousin of his beloved.

"How would you have acted to save me?" he inquired, affecting not to take the young widow's statement as serious.

"What would be the good of your knowing?" she coldly replied. "If I had pledged myself to you, I should have kept my promise. You might not again bear arms against my country but you would have seen France again. I have more power than you presume."

"Oh, I know that you are daughter of the Count de Montalvan and that all the insurrectionists obey him. Were I to decide upon delivering you over to the military authorities, he would pay with his head for the thought he had to exterminate us all this night."

"My father has nothing to fear. He is not in Teruel—and if he were, you would tremble before him."

This sharply uttered retort struck the captain, who began to get an inkling. Uncle Blas would be with Villacampa ready to attack with the bands as soon as the inhabitants opened the town gates at the given moment. Perhaps it drew near, for guards were changed at dusk and that might be the moment chosen to surprise the French.

"Senora," he said without flinching, "I have never trembled before any man. I laugh at your threats, but I do not want to owe you anything. My duty is to advise my leaders, that an attempt is afoot to take Teruel from us. I will not tell them how I learned this. You may leave the town if you consider you have still time to flee, before one of your friends gives the signal awaited by his fellows to rush upon the French. Bear in mind that in half an hour it may be too late, and

that if you fall into the hands of my soldiers, I should uselessly try to save you."

The Spanish woman did not reply. Again approaching the balcony, she was listening to the outer sounds; evidently, she watched for a signal.

Listening also, Fontenay heard nothing but a distant confused noise.

The falling night was fine—a true Spanish spring-time night, made for placid enjoyment, and yet, under that starry sky, men were sharpening the knives for others' throats! Impressed with the thought of having not a minute to lose, the captain said abruptly:

"Lady, I entreat you to flee—and I will keep my word. But I am going to do my duty as a soldier of France."

Montalvan's daughter did not try to detain him and he flew down the stairs at one leap and rushed into the store, where he found the duenna crouched behind the counter.

Violent knocking sounded on the door. At first Fontenay believed it was Angel returning home and he was going to receive him on his sword's point. But on drawing the bolt, he faced Tournesol who shouted:

"You, captain! I began to believe the brigands had murdered you. I guessed you were here, and I have found you—heaven be thanked! Come out quick!"

"What's happened?"

"The revolt has begun. All the people are afoot. At every corner stand a dozen. I saw them as I came along, and they only refrained from cutting me down because they have the order not to attack until the command. You ordered me to stay in barracks but I stood on sentry duty before the door and I saw it was only time to go after you. If the governor does not have the general tattoo-beaten instant, we are all done for, captain."

"I shall run to the commandant! I hope he will receive me and will listen! I am sure to find him scrawling reports. I know what will happen in that case: he will not raise his eyes and he will wave me away not to disturb him in his work."

"Better to see Captain Zolnycki, who is on guard at the main gate with his Poles."

"You are right. Run and tell him I send you, as I have gone to warn the governor. Zolnycki will do all

that is needful to prevent our posts being surprised, and I will join him presently. Oh, do not forget to tell him also that the confectioner has left his store."

Fontenay thought of the unfortunate young widow left in Angel's house, to whom he wished to leave time to flee or conceal herself before a French patrol swooped on the pastry-cook's.

"I just met the sweetmeat man," growled Tournesol, "and I am quite sure that he was not buying sugar, for he was concealing his face in his cloak; but I recognized him all the same, and I know where he is. I saw him sneak into that ugly, shiny square tower like a porcelain stove, called St. Martin's Tower."

"San Martin's Tower!" ejaculated Fontenay; "the Arab tower rising above one of the town gates?"

"Yes, captain," answered the orderly. "I climbed up in it once. There's a splendid view when you get on top."

"Are you sure our Angel went in there?"

"Sure as I am that his brother Spaniard who gave you the stab in your Rue Saint Nicaise, is a villain. Angel stole in, to hide himself. The door was open and he did not shut it behind him. I would give something to know what mischief he is up to, there!"

"Does this tower belong to a church?" suddenly inquired the captain.

"It is the belfry of Saint Martin's Church. There are nine churches in this hole of a Teruel which is no bigger than my hand."

"I understand matters now. In a belfry there are bells—"

"In that one, there's a whopper! what one would call the big bell of Teruel, and when it booms it would be heard a deuce of a way off!"

"It is to sound the general alarm—the tocsin—the signal they are waiting for, and Angel is to ring it out!"

"That's very likely! Oh, the scoundrell!"

"He must not ring it. Come!"

"I see! we are to put the rope round his neck?"

"This is more urgent than to go to the governor's. The Spaniards will not stir till the bell rings."

"It shall not, captain! though I have to cut the rope with my saber!"

"Not so much talk! let us march!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GREAT BELL OF ST. MARTIN'S.

Tournesol, knowing the road, took the precedence; the captain locked step with him, and in following his orderly, he could verify his unexaggerated statement that the entire population were out and about. Ordinarily after dark, the streets were deserted and the houses closed. On this evening, groups were seen in the dark corners and whispering was heard behind the slightly open doors.

Not one French soldier showed himself. Those not returned into barracks were feasting in the wine stores. The garrison was so far from numerous that the insurgents could swallow these stragglers at a mouthful. But it was probable that they would not attack before the signal.

It was imperative to outstrip them by swiftmess and, luckily, Saint Martin's was not far.

On arriving over the Saragossa road, one can see this bell-tower a league off; it is a minaret, as it was built by the Arabs who, after overrunning Aragon, made a mosque of this church. Since the French occupation, the building had been closed by military order from being too near the outer wall, but, unfortunately, the entrance to the belfry had not also been closed. The ogee archway which it overhung, had been walled up, however, so that, on the rampart side, the town was safe from an unforeseen assault as the assailants would have to scale the wall and they would not have ladders.

As Tournesol had stated, Fontenay found the tower door open, and he walked in without hesitation.

"Captain," said the cuirassier, "there are two hundred steps to mount; the bell is at top and the stairs are not wide. Let me show the way."

"Do so, but let us lose no time. If the alarm commences while we are climbing, those rogues will come to capture the tower and we will be caught like rats in a pipe."

Tournesol drew his sword before stepping into the staircase well, and his captain did the same, for it was not to be supposed Don Angel would let himself be taken without resistance.

The ascent was arduous and they made it in shadow.

Up to half-way, the tower had no air-holes and even in broad day they would not have seen clearly.

They hastened, as a moment's delay might ruin all, and at every instant Fontenay fancied he heard the first boom of the alarm peal out over his head.

But no sound rang forth and nothing stirred.

No doubt Angel had received the order to give the signal at a fixed moment, for instance, an hour after sunset, and there he was counting the minutes, for the sun had disappeared some little time; maybe counting the seconds.

So did the captain who fretted at not advancing more speedily.

As they rose, however, the stairs became less gloomy.

All the upper portion of the tower is open, as in stone lacework, and, night-time though it was, a little light filtered through apertures which make the structure a marvel of lightness. They were approaching the loft of the great bell, where no doubt Don Blas' lieutenant was stationed. If there, he did not reveal his presence as the stillness was more profound than ever.

It was necessary to fall on him unawares, and Tournesol was very heedful not to strike the steps either with the naked sword grasped in his right hand or the steel scabbard hanging from his belt.

Soon he stopped and pressed himself against the wall to make room for his captain who had followed him and softly drew himself up until beside him, shoulder to shoulder.

The stairs ended here and they were standing in it, only head and body out. They stared into the dimly lighted chamber without seeing anything. Gradually their eyes grew accustomed to the twilight and they

finally discerned Angel standing in the middle of the spacious square, with his arms stretched bolt upright. He was in his shirt-sleeves, having thrown down his cloak and removed his coat to be more free in movements. So bell-ringers make ready for their work, and it was not difficult to divine he was about to imitate them in all respects.

All of a sudden the clock of another church rang for eight o'clock. Angel hung upon the rope which he held, bent his knees to pull with his weight in addition, rose on being carried up by a weight superior to his own, and pulled again to have the same result happen him.

The bell was already in swing, but it was so heavy that Angel's first efforts were not sufficient to give it the full play. The hammer had not struck the bronze shell but two or three more tugs would unchain the alarm awaited by the Spaniards.

Tournesol bounded forward with uplifted saber, but in the darkness he did not see the discarded clothes, and stumbling on the heap, the cloak wound itself like a reptile round his feet and threw him toward the wall. Luckily his captain had closely followed him, and leaping over him as he nearly measured his length, he dealt a furious sweep of his sword at the rope. But, falling short, the blade cleft the skull of the bell-ringer who released the rope and dropped in a mass.

"He is dead," cried Tournesol, rising from under him and the cloak. "He will ring no more bells. The bell will remain dumb and the citizens of Teruel will have to go to bed!"

"Hark!" whispered Fontenay solemnly.

A deep, sonorous clang vibrated over their heads. The swordsman had struck too late. The big bell was on the swing and could not be stopped now. They would have to wait for the impulsion it had received to die away progressively, and Don Angel had put so much vigor into it that the vibrations would continue after his death—his knell. The alarm was ringing out by itself, calling the Spaniards to massacre.

Fate was against the French.

Fontenay regretted now having tried to do too much

alone on his orderly's cues and thought only of repairing his fault by running to alarm his comrades.

Better late than never! he rushed into the staircase well, shouting for Tournesol to follow. Spurred by the vibrations, at longer and longer intervals, but not yet inaudible, they ran down the stairs very much more rapidly than they had ascended. On reaching the bottom, they heard nothing. Left to itself, the bell had gradually returned to its place of rest and rang no more.

The question was, had the conspirators taken as the signal agreed upon, this so quickly interrupted appeal of the bronze annunciator? The street ending at the tower was deserted; and no uproar indicated that the revolt had broken forth; but in the distance gun-shots were to be heard—isolated at first but subsequently repeated frequently.

"That comes from the direction of the gate guarded by the Poles!" exclaimed Tournesol. "They were not taken by surprise for they return the fire and if they are not attacked in the rear they will hold their own. That rascally candy-maker! I wish I had not missed my cut at him."

"Let us run!" shouted Fontenay. "There's no time to warn the commandant. We must go where the fighting is."

This was a petty application of the noted principle: "March toward the cannonading!" for only small arms were heard up to the present.

But would the captain and his man arrive at the main gate without being attacked on the way? At the first tap of the bell, the Spanish had issued from the dwellings where they had been in hiding, and they awaited the repeated strokes, to fall on the French gate-guards in the rear. But as the ringing had almost instantly ceased, they wavered, in fear of an error. They were clustered in the gloomy streets, listening for the alarm. The distant rattling of the fusillade might have determined them into rushing thither, but they knew their outside friends reckoned on entering unawares, and this firing proved that the surprise had failed, for the French were defending themselves. Many of the rioters were armed solely with knives, useful for slaying soldiers routed, but insuf-

ficient to charge them on their guard and energetically resisting.

The guerrilleros had commenced too soon by taking the first clang of San Martin's bell for the alarm.

The inhabitants, more wary folk, waited for them to force the gate and enter the town before rising. They allowed Fontenay and Tournesol to pass, who did not linger to disperse them, and they joined the Poles without hindrance.

These stout fellows were so few in number that they had much difficulty in preventing the foe seizing the gate, and Captain Zolnycki esteemed himself very happy to see two such redoubtable sabers strike in so timely.

The struggle was sharp but short, for the irregulars were not armed to cope with men whose lancers' experience made them formidable with the bayonet and the three or four swordsmen who scattered the knives like ears of wheat under the scythe.

The dense night seemed to quench the gun-fire. Though the attempt was thwarted, the situation was not brilliant. The French were only three hundred to defend a town with its entire population hostile, while all indicated that the place would be blockaded by the numerous irregulars in the outskirts.

"Turn about is fair play," sadly observed Zolnycki. "We are going to be besieged in the same way as the Spanish were three months ago at Saragossa, and we may end like them with the obligation to surrender—with the difference that we will not be shown mercy. We'll be massacred."

"We'll not capitulate!" cried the American.

"I hope not, but if we are not relieved in a fortnight, they will storm Teruel. I fear nobody will come to deliver us. Suchet is marching upon Valencia, taking with him all disposable troops, except the Saragossa garrison. We are left to ourselves, brother, and on ourselves alone we must rely."

This dialogue was interrupted by the arrival of the colonel in command of the place, a brave officer who was capable of taking vigorous measures although fond of writing dispatches. He had foreseen the outbreak with-

out conferring with his subordinates, and had his plan ready for the crisis.

After hearing Zolnycki and Fontenay, he stated that the feeble garrison were concentrating in a monastery near the outer wall, strongly fortified. Already the wounded were installed in it, as well as provisions and ammunition so that resistance could be protracted. It was the wisest course, in the impossibility of defending the town at all points from the deficiency of soldiers.

They had the whole night to carry out the plan conformable to General Suchet's instructions left with the colonel, for the repulsed guerrillas did not renew the attack.

Informed by the West Indian of the adventure in St. Martin's bell-tower, the colonel declared house to house searches should be commenced next day and all shot who had concealed weapons. Detachments were left to watch the threatened gate who kept up long-range firing with the external foes to mask the contemplated giving up of the post when they should retire upon the convent.

The colonel had five or six trusty officers, French and Polish, one an engineer captain as steady as experienced. This choice band sufficed for the needs of the defense, and each received at once the orders concerning him.

Fontenay was charged to go immediately to the monastery to commence the preparations for holding out, and he hastened to obey, all the more willingly as he would have to pass the late Don Angel's confectionery. On his account, the establishment had such ill-fame that the soldiers would surely search it next day, and the chances were that they would discover a store of weapons, for Angel, half-beheaded by Fontenay so opportunely, was certainly the chief of the town-rioters.

Fontenay was obstinately bent on saving the life of the indomitable woman who had so rebelliously received him. Though his worst enemy's daughter, he admired her courage and he would be pained to let her run the risk of being shot; she resembled her cousin too closely.

The only means to shield her from the impending doom was to urge her to put herself in security before

the search began. Without divulging military secrets, he might give his sweetheart's kinswoman humane advice. He did not doubt her ability to use it, as she would have other refuges in Teruel more in safety than in the house of an avowed foe of the French.

Tournesol was no babbler and would not relate that his captain, in going to the fortified monastery, had paused for a while.

At the confectioner's door stood the watching duenna.

She was evidently expecting the rioting to begin and fretting at the delay.

"Lead me to the lady," said Fontenay.

"Senor, she has gone," was the reply.

"She is in the room still! Come, take a lamp and light me."

"I am willing, senor—but you will find nobody in. Your threats so alarmed the lady that she quitted the house."

"Where is she?"

"*Non saber, Senor.*"

"You lie! I cannot force you to tell me where she is, but I charge you to declare to her on my behalf that if she returns here, she will be straightway seized, tried, condemned and shot. You may also tell her that the man who kept this store has given up his villainous ghost to Satan. As for you, old witch, get you gone, if you cling to life! to-morrow will be too late."

The duenna did not start; no doubt she had sound reasons not to be frightened.

Fontenay had done enough, and there would be nothing to reproach himself with if misfortune befell Montalvan's daughter.

Tournesol did not take the liberty to comment. He gathered that a woman was at the bottom of this digression, but he could not suspect it was the mourner he had seen in the cathedral square of Saragossa, far less the daughter of the assassin of the Rue Saint Nicaise. It little troubled him in any case. His captain had the right to act as he pleased without being obliged to relate his doings to his orderly.

"Where is she?" the fiancée of Marguerite wondered.

"She has no doubt succeeded in leaving the town."

The houses built into the wall are in communication with the country. She will join Uncle Blas, who is certainly with Villacampa. Upon my word, I do not long to see her again—it is he I seek! Perhaps I may meet him only too soon, for I begin to believe that we will not be succored and the siege of Teruel will end disastrously. But I shall not be taken alive, and my good sword will not be handed over undented!"

Fontenay was no prophet, and the young widow was not so far off as he hoped.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OVER THE VOLCANO.

The colonel was well advised to concentrate his troops in a fortified monastery, instead of continuing to defend the gates of Teruel. The day after the first alarm, the attack was renewed more fiercely, and Villacampa's bands penetrated the town. The driven-in French had barely time to take refuge in the stronghold.

The towns-folk had risen as soon as they saw the irregulars enter, and the handful of brave men intrenched in the holy edifice had to hold out for the arrival of problematical relief, for they were too few to attempt to cut through.

Villacampa was impudent enough to call on the garrison to surrender, but there is no need to repeat how he was answered.

The position of affairs was almost desperate. With no possible communications with the outer world, the besieged were overlooked on all sides, except where the Guadalaviar flowed below the building. A church had been carried by storm by the Spaniards and from its steeple a very destructive, plunging fire was directed on the improvised fort. Luckily, they had no cannon, and the engineer captain had, with fine foresight, made the windows shot-proof, and protected by cross-works all the points where assaults might have been attempted.

But without counting the loss of men from the Spanish bullets, the carefully doled-out supplies would finally become exhausted, and a day must come when unconditional surrender would be unavoidable unless they risked a forlorn hope in a sally, to die sword in hand.

This lasted for a fortnight.

Zolnycki lost nothing of his energy, but he had

augured darkly from the first. The West Indian, as firm, was convinced that not one of them would escape the imminent final catastrophe. Resigned to his fate, he did not in the least think of Montalvan and his daughter, but entirely of Marguerite. If he could see her before he died, death would appear less cruel.

Tournesol had retained all his gayety, and although he had forgotten the tender grocer's widow, he consoled himself for not marrying her by saying that he was probably unsuitable for a domestic life.

All the officers stoutly supported the privations and valiantly did their duty.

Despite several defects, the colonel was worthy of commanding them. His right-hand, the engineer, multiplied himself and was able for all emergencies.

The soldiers behaved admirably.

Of all the sufferings endured stoically by these heroes, the most painful was the absence of news. Nothing arrived since the first attack. What was going on in Aragon? where was Suchet's army? Reduced to conjectures, everything was to be dreaded, for the prolonged silence was of very ill omen.

One morning, sixteenth day of the blockade, before dawn, the besieged were aroused by a sharp musketry fire at the main gate, and they did not doubt that it was attacked by their liberators. The colonel ordered a sortie, executed with indescribable dash but not the less very rash. Still it did not turn out badly, and Fontenay, commanding it, literally cut out of the guerrilleros' hands and brought into the fort a French officer and four men of his escort who were found trying to force their way in. They would have been slain to the last man unless so succored. On the battle-ground they left several dead and their officer was wounded. It was Carénac and Fontenay shouted for joy when he recognized him. This was the second time he saved the life of his antagonist at Malmaison. And Carénac did not shrink from expressing his gratitude before all the troopers who had aided their officer to deliver him.

When they were all in shelter behind the monastery wall, Carénac, before his wound was dressed, answered the questions put by the colonel, and with perfect clear-

ness, although a guerrilla's bullet had gone through the flesh of the left arm.

He came from Daroca, whither he had gone with his squadrons after the Albarracin affair, and he brought some information. It was of his own impulse that he attempted this adventure with a dozen horsemen of his regiment. He gave the reason. It was known at Daroca on the previous night, that Villacampa, temporarily raising the blockade of Teruel, had gone with nearly all his forces toward Valencia, to a point where he hoped to surprise an isolated Polish company in the mountains. This movement left the road a few hours free, and the bold Carénac had snatched the opportunity.

He also announced that a strong French column, with four, guns was to leave Daroca an hour after him to march toward Teruel along the Guadalaviar. If it had kept on during the night, it would not be far and the beleaguered garrison might go to meet it on hearing its cannon.

General enthusiasm arose. The officers shouted: "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and the men ran to the racks to get their muskets. To complete the happiness, the cannon was not long before booming, perhaps betokening deliverance, and the ever-wary colonel had much to do to restrain the ardor of his followers. He ascended to the top story of the monastery to listen and measure their distance from the battle-ground.

The three captains went with him and soon acknowledged that the hopes arising from Carénac's story would have to be abated.

The action was to pass on a level land, more than a league from Teruel; the wind came from that quarter, which enabled them to watch all the incidents. At first, the sound of the cannonade seemed to approach—a good sign—but before long the shots were less frequent and all less distinct. It was clear that the relief-body recoiled instead of advancing, and to rush out would be folly, as the Spaniards, who had repulsed the column from Daroca, would turn upon the little garrison and annihilate it.

Carénac, whose hurt had been dressed, was again questioned and declared that Daroca was without news of General Suchet, and that dismal rumors were

current about the issue of the hazardous expedition he had undertaken.

In two hours further, it was impossible to doubt that Villacampa had beaten the Daroca detachment, as his men were seen resuming their positions around the town, quitted to bar the road to the reinforcements.

The last hope of the besieged vanished; all they could do was nobly to die.

From the loop-holes they saw the towns-people prepare to assault. The neighboring houses had holes knocked in them to level muskets through, and strong barriers were built at the mouths of the streets as bases for the storming parties to form. It was doubtful that these would be repulsed, and if they carried the place in a rush, all knew no quarter would be granted.

A short and stirring speech from the colonel exalted their courage. The wounded and ailing still able to hold a gun, rose to be killed erect like their valid comrades. Those who could not leave their beds, armed themselves with bayonets, to sell dearly what little remained of life.

Carénac, though his left arm was in a sling had his sword drawn in the other hand and considered himself "good for half-a-dozen olive-eaters."

The other officers were equally ready.

"If you see France again," said the creole to Tournesol, "tell Mlle. de Gavre that my last thought was for her."

Tournesol was about to protest that he should not outlive his captain when a bugle-call was heard without, and not sounding "the charge."

On a sign from the colonel, Fontenay went up to a loop-hole in the wall, looked out and returned to say:

"The rabble stick at nothing. They are sending us a flag of truce as if they were real soldiers and not mountain robbers."

"What do you say to this, gentlemen?" inquired the colonel of the group around him.

"Colonel," replied Fontenay, "if you consent to receive the fellow who flutters his handkerchief on his gunbarrel, you will pay him too great a compliment."

"I believe the rogues are playing some trick," remarked

Zolnycki. "We must not fire on a flag, but my opinion is that he should be waved back and fire opened on the ruffians who sent him as soon as he gets behind the barricade."

The only one maintaining the contrary course was the engineer. Holding him in high esteem, the colonel sided with him, after some hesitation. By his order, one of the shielded windows was cleared out, a white flag hung over it, and Fontenay, with Tournesol who had borrowed the trumpet of Carénac's cuirassiers, went down to the monastery door to challenge the insurgents' messenger. The door required much work to clear it.

It gave direct access into the refectory where the colonel came with his officers to hear the propositions.

Fontenay was to have served as interpreter but there was no need to have recourse to him, as, at the first words uttered by the bearer of the flag of truce, it was clear that he thoroughly understood French. He was a good-looking young fellow whom Fontenay might have thought familiar in features but for an aristocratic demeanor rare in the natives whom the soldier had been in the habit of meeting. He jauntily wore an elegant, fanciful uniform, without epaulets or embroidery, yet very theatrical. He did not appear intimidated by the martial array as he unfolded in a steady voice the following little address:

"Colonel, my chief, General Villacampa, sends me to inform you that he surprised and dispersed on the day before yesterday at Alventosa, one of your Polish companies; that he completely defeated, a league away, a strong column, leaving Daroca yesterday; its men have laid down their arms and are all prisoners; we hold the artillery. Finally, your General Suchet has met a total defeat before Valence; his army is retreating in disorder toward Catalonia but will be annihilated before reaching it."

Of all these items of intelligence, two might be true, as the hearers knew, but not one blanched. That about the destruction of Suchet's army required the proverbial grain of salt and nobody believed it.

In the same calm tone and a voice, that did not seem new to Fontenay, the envoy proceeded:

"Colonel, you have therefore no outer help to expect and to prolong resistance will be folly, heroic but useless. Out of consideration for your handsome defense and your soldiers' bravery, the general offers you honorable capitulation. You will be treated like my fellow-countrymen after the giving up of Saragossa."

"This means that we will become prisoners of war?"

"The officers may be exchanged for ours fallen into your hands."

"Very well. We are not going to yield."

"Colonel," returned Villacampa's imperturbable representative, "this decision does honor to your courage. You will be responsible for the bloodshed—not Spanish!"

"Do you not think we shall defend ourselves?" testily queried the colonel.

"On the contrary, I believe you would do so with the utmost energy, but we are not going to attack."

"I understand. You rely on famine, the favorite method of men who do not like steel and shot. Try it, sir! it will take a long time, for we are victualed for four months to come."

"General Villacampa has no time to wait till you exhaust them. He must promptly conclude the driving of the French from Aragon and Spain. Before resuming the campaign against the remnants of your army beaten at Valence, he means to have done with you. I am instructed to notify you that if you do not accept the conditions offered, he will blow up this building."

"The monastery would have to be mined for that to happen."

"It is so. Our engineers have been at work at it for three weeks. The mine has been driven under the building, and is loaded, we have only to clap the torch to it."

The officers exchanged glances, understanding the sounds they had heard for a week past, the strokes of the miners' pickaxes in the earth underneath them; they did not doubt that the enemy, having entered a neighboring house, had continued its cellar into those of the monastery.

"If this were true, you would not have waited so long," the colonel disdainfully responded.

"It was only yesterday we were ready, and the general

gives you but till evening to decide. If you do not evacuate this building by sunset, and lay down your arms, the mine will be fired."

"Well, we shall go up," returned the colonel, persuaded that the Spanish were not in a way to realize the threat.

"Colonel," said the Spanish voice of the parley, "perhaps you doubt the existence of the mine? The general offers an assurance of the fact by allowing one or two of your officers to visit it. When you hear their report, you can determine whether or not it is right to let brave soldiers perish instead of accepting an inevitable capitulation."

However resolved not to surrender, the commander could not reject this invitation. Yet he hesitated, for the memory haunted them all of the sorrowful capitulation of Baylen; since that disaster, the number was great who preferred death by their own hands to laying down their arms. But, unlike at Baylen, this was not a capitulation in the open country. The case for fortified place was foreseen in the military regulations, authorizing the governor to verify the enemy's allegations before coming to a decision.

"Be it so," answered the colonel. "I consent to what you propose, but it is understood that I remain master to continue the resistance even if I learn that you tell the truth."

"General Villacampa never breaks his word. He will wait till evening for your reply."

All the colonel had to do now was to designate the officer for this confidential errand, perhaps dangerous, as the insurrectionists, commanded by an irregular general, were capable of shooting the bearer of a flag of truce. The colonel chose Fontenay because he spoke Spanish and was able to see clearly and judge on what he saw. He might also hear something worth its repetition. The creole was ready; he only asked for Tournesol to be his herald with the trumpet, and that raised no difficulty.

Correct to the end, the white-flag bearer courteously saluted the colonel and his officers before withdrawing.

Fontenay walked forth with him. He was willing to have his eyes blindfolded according to the usage, but Villacampa's envoy said it was useless, as they had merely to

enter the contiguous house. The road was so short that Fontenay could see nothing of the besiegers' works save what they wanted to show him. Behind the rough breastworks were the ferocious armed peasants who evidently regretted having no permission to shoot him.

Tournesol followed at the prescribed distance beside the Spanish trumpeter, stiff and silent as a stone statue.

The house they were to inspect was guarded by a strong picket of men, commanded by an officer who exchanged a few words with his brother officer, perfectly understood by Fontenay.

"When they see it, they will give in," the officer had remarked in Spanish.

Fontenay and his orderly were taken down into the cellar; they were led into a freshly dug tunnel ending beneath the monastery wall in a cave where, by the dim glow of several safety-lanterns, workmen were laying a long match destined to fire a score of barrels of gunpowder arranged in rows in the center of the excavation.

"You may count them, captain," said Villacampa's officer. "There is enough to send your building sky high, and you can see that we do not lack expert miners. The preparations will be terminated by noon and our precautions are taken against our men being injured by the explosions. The sun sets at half-past seven, but my general does not mind waiting till eight o'clock for your commandant's reply."

Fontenay could no longer doubt, having to yield to evidences. The French had no choice between capitulation and letting themselves be crushed under the monastery ruins.

"Captain, call your soldier to you," said the Spanish officer suddenly, "and forbid him blundering among those kegs. This is no place for an inebriate and I have no wish to visit the moon!"

Since he had come, Fontenay had not troubled himself about his orderly and he had not remarked that he was indeed fidgeting among the barrels, now saving himself from falling by resting his hand on one, now clumsily banging his saber-scabbard tip against a lower one; the steel might have started a spark and they would all be blown up, Spanish and French together. Worse than a

great imprudence, it was a great peril, and Tournesol was not in his place according to regulations. His captain sharply bade him come away, which he did so awkwardly as to touch the kegs more than once in making half the circuit of them.

"I have nothing further to show you, captain," continued the Spanish officer, "but I suppose you have seen enough to corroborate to your commandant our having all ready upon an order from General Villacampa to finish the matter."

"I have seen indeed all that I wanted to see and I can make my report," laconically answered Fontenay, studying the speaker whom still he could not claim as an old acquaintance.

"I will then escort you back to the monastery. As soon as you enter, the firing will recommence as we have not agreed on a suspension of hostilities; at sunset they will cease on our side, and at eight o'clock, if my general shall not have received a reply, the mine will be exploded without farther notice."

Fontenay was conducted home with the same ceremony. On parting from him, at the door of the undermined building, the still unrecognized Spaniard took leave of him in these winning terms:

"Not farewell, captain, but may we meet again!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LION'S ADVICE.

The colonel was waiting for his messenger, surrounded by his officers, but before questioning Fontenay, he dismissed Tournesol into the first story as one not qualified to take part in the debate. Fontenay fancied that Tournesol, who seemed sober enough by this time, obeyed unwillingly as if he had something to say but dared not speak from respect for his superiors.

"Colonel," began Fontenay, "all is true. Under our feet are twenty barrels of gunpowder, with the match laid. Nothing need be done but light it, and that will be done at eight p. m. precisely."

"It is still time enough for relief," said the old soldier, decided on doing anything but yielding. "I do not credit the defeat of Suchet's army."

"What makes me doubt it," agreed the wary Pole, "is Villacampa's haste to end matters. If he did not dread outside interference, he would wait till we ran out of powder or food."

"My advice is the same," said the engineer officer, "and I believe he would rather capture than destroy us. The laurels of Castanos won in the Baylen affair prevent him sleeping. He, although only a captain of irregulars, wishes to make French prisoners and show them to the common people of Aragon."

"A shame that I will not undergo," said the impetuous American.

"I do not like it either," added the colonel, "we will hold out to the very last. If we are to be blown up, blown up we shall be. These *Villa-scampas* will have nothing but ruins to take."

"Wait to be blown up?" exclaimed the West Indian,

"Wait for anything when we may have a slash at them with our swords? stupidly await death in a monastery when it depends upon ourselves alone to charge the ragamuffins? they are ten against one! but what's the odds, indeed? are we not worth ten apiece of Spanish peasants? we can plough as broad a furrow in them as any mine, and if we all go down, it will be dying in the broad sunlight as becomes soldiers of our glorious Emperor!"

This speech electrified all hearers.

"Yes, yes," they shouted, "let us go out upon the enemy!"

Zolnycki did not shout; shouting was not his forte; but he silently grasped Fontenay's hand; the engineer captain did the same. All that was waiting was the colonel's approbation. He was silent, but they could read in his eyes that he shared their feelings if he might not associate himself with them in their enthusiasm.

"I will lop my hand off sooner than sign a capitulation with such scum," he said coldly, and added with a grim smile, "for I am not so fond of writing as that comes to! It is for form's sake that I have consulted you, for my resolve was taken, and I think, with Captain Fontenay, that it is better to sally out to seek death than receive it between falling walls. I will march at your head, each man will do his duty—"

"Yes, our men long for the fighting," said Fontenay. "You must have remarked that awhile ago when you announced the Spanish offered to storm us."

"I should like to see them. Come, gentlemen!"

All went up the broad staircase leading from the old refectory of the monks to the upper floors where the little garrison lived and fought. As Villacampa's emissary had promised, the firing recommenced and the soldiers at the loop-holes were exchanging shots with the insurgents behind their barricades. Some were cleaning their guns; the hospital patients who had risen on the colonel's former visit, were still up. It was plain that they expected to be "done for," to use their words, and were preparing.

"My boys," said the old leader, "this building is undermined and if we stay in it we will be blown up in among the stars at eight o'clock to-night. Are you ready to try a sortie?"

"Ready," repeated the soldiers in chorus, including the

Polanders to whom Zolnycki translated the words aloud.

"Many may keep the ground they measure for a grave, but those who break through will go and join General Suchet's army to carry on war in the open air instead of dying of famine in this vile den of Teruel."

"Let us march out!" was the single outcry.

"But the wounded?"

"We'll carry them among us."

"I want no carrying," observed Carénac, joining the group of officers, "and with my sword—"

"You can be my aid-de-camp!" interrupted the old colonel. "We will issue in two columns—first, commanded by Captain Fontenay; second, by Captain Zolnycki. You, sir," he went on to the engineer captain, "keep by me with the sappers till left to you. The point we make for is the main town gate-way. But what is the matter with you, Captain Fontenay? you are not listening to me."

For some little while, Fontenay had been greatly troubled to get rid of Tournesol, who had edged up near enough to touch him and venture upon tugging at his sleeve. Repelling him, the captain said loudly:

"Have done with it! what do you want?"

Brushing up his courage, Tournesol replied:

"I have something to tell the colonel and you, captain."

"Out with it, then!"

"But not here, captain."

Fontenay believed that the Spaniard was right in thinking Tournesol inebriated and he was going to rebuke him roughly, but the keener-sighted colonel beckoned him to follow with the orderly to the end of the large room. He guessed that the well-known good soldier had some valuable communication to disclose and he encouraged him.

"Colonel," began he, "I did not like to speak before the men because—because—you know, they are brave enough and would rather pull hair with these beggars than be blown up, but if they learn there is no risk of that, they might not be so hot about running out to get their heads broken."

"And I should hesitate to lead them. But what is your drift?"

"Colonel, I will take my oath that I have no tender-

ness for my skin and that I am ready to go forth any way."

"Not so much talk! finish, dash it all! what is in the wind?"

"Well, colonel, that Spanish dandy was hoaxing us—"

"Villacampa's envoy? how's that?"

"He wanted to deceive us into a surrender to avoid a trip to the moon. It is a hoax arranged by these jokers to terrify us."

"A hoax? but you must have seen the powder kegs since you accompanied your captain."

"Well, yes, captain, I saw some powder kegs—I cannot deny that—I went so far as to count them—two-and-twenty, and full size."

"Enough to shake over the monastery and half of the town along with it."

"Yes, colonel, if they were full."

"Well half-full will do the trick."

"Colonel, they are powder kegs and not kegs of powder—there is not a grain of powder in them."

"What do you know about it, man?" roughly challenged Fontenay, exasperated by his subordinate's persistency.

"Captain, do you not remember the sunny-faced officer getting angry with me because I touched his old barrels?"

"He was right," said Fontenay in an ill-temper. "Your place was behind me. Why did you not keep it?"

"Captain," replied Tournesol without emotion, "on going into the cave, my idea was that the game was a fraud and to make sure I thought to sound the kegs. I did it, too. I tapped with the end of my scabbard—not only one but every one, and all sounded hollow."

"You cheated yourself!"

"That's not possible, captain, for I understand barrels—my father made them. As a farther proof of there being nothing in them, I leaned with my hand on one beside which I stood, and moved it easily; I could have overturned it if I had pressed a little more heavily but I was not such a fool! the Spaniard would have seen that I saw through the trick and we should not have got out of the tunnel alive."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Fontenay, unfairly vexed at

being in the wrong and not inclined to acknowledge his deception through appearances. "If we were to rely on your report, we should stay here and be blown up."

"I swear, captain, that I do not cleave to the place. I would rather sally forth even if I am slain three steps beyond the door. I have said what I was bound to say. Now I wait for the colonel's orders and yours."

This was the first time that Tournesol had ventured not to be of his captain's way of thinking, which furnished food for Fontenay's reflection, knowing the Gascon's sagacity and fidelity.

The colonel could alone cut the knot and he was very perplexed. He was inclined to believe that Tournesol was right, in which case, the sortie would be a crazy act of desperation. It might be risked to try escape from certain death, but if the Spaniards were short of powder—and they did not threaten to use the field guns they boasted of having captured—it was a hundred times better quietly to await the effect of the unrealizable threat.

The fortified and strongly guarded monastery was impregnable. Although the food would only last six weeks and not four months, as the colonel had bragged to Villacampa's envoy, the state of things would be modified in the former period. News would come from Suchet's army. If destroyed, there would still be time to capitulate; if, on the other hand, it returned victorious the Teruel garrison would certainly be relieved.

Consequently, they should play all for all.

"My dear captain," said the colonel, after his pondering, "I have full confidence in you and do not doubt the conclusions of your verbal report. You told me what you saw and I place great reliance on your views; but nobody is infallible, and I am forced to be extraordinarily well informed. The sortie has as many chances of being successful in an hour or two as now, and I want to examine the Spaniard's position and the obstacles to be overcome before essaying it. From the bell-tower on the roof we can get a bird's-eye view. Come up there with me while my other officers superintend the final preparations, for I have not yet given up your suggestion. It is the lion's counsel but perhaps the sole

remaining chance of safety. Get back among your comrades, my lad, and do not say a word about what you have heard."

This last sentence was addressed to Tournesol who hastened to obey it, and the colonel, after speaking a few words of encouragement to the other two captains on the way by them, entered with Fontenay a spiral staircase leading up to the bell. This was in the middle of the roof, a most perilous post, as it was the target for the Spanish sharp-shooters, ambushed in the street and houses. None could show himself there without hearing the bullets sing around him, and more than one look-out man had been hit since the insurgents had become masters of the town, for they aimed accurately.

"This is odd," remarked the colonel, on entering the kind of cupola; "they have ceased firing, or at least only our fellows are blazing away out of the windows. On whom? for I cannot see any one behind the breast-works."

"They seem to be abandoned," muttered the younger officer, as much astonished as his colonel.

"And yonder, outside the town-gates, see the men scampering toward the Saragossa road—like a flock of sheep. If I am not purblind, they are Villacampa's guerrilleros running for their lives."

"As fast as they can, and their leader is about following them. I see him over there, on horseback, on the roadside, giving orders. I begin to believe he is raising the siege. He has heard of help coming to us."

"Suchet's army, perhaps! but, no! we should see his skirmishers in that case—or hear the cannon—"

"If it were his vanguard, it would arrive from the way of Valence, and the mountain hides it. It is certain that the Spanish are vacating Teruel, and look, colonel, the town's-people are doing the same—see them choking up the gate-way! the cry is, Old Nick take the hindmost! Oh, if Suchet should fall on them now, not one would escape! but he cannot be far, though at the speed they are traveling, there will soon be none but us in the town."

CHAPTER XXX.

CAPTURING THE COLORS.

It was true. People were seen darting out of all the dwellings, like wasps shaken from their nests, and hurrying to gain the country. They were evidently obeying an order from Villacampa, transmitted with the swiftness of lightning, for the mob seemed squeezed out of the heart of Teruel. Rich or poor, women and children, or old men, all fled, and the last were not the least eager to flee.

No doubt they knew that Suchet's Frenchmen were not far, and they feared reprisal too acutely to risk falling into their hands.

Fontenay thought this the moment to attack the cowards in the rear and impatiently awaited the colonel's command for the now victorious sally on the retreating foe. The colonel was brave to the last drop of blood, as the soldiers say, but he had never hastily taken a course.

Since the sham gunpowder trick, he dreamed of nothing but stratagems, and distrusted everything, so that he wondered if the guerrillas' sudden departure and the exodus of the population had not been commanded by Villacampa to decoy the feeble garrison into an ambuscade where all would be massacred.

He leveled his telescope on the heights vacated by the irregulars, firmly decided on not moving but on certainty—in other words, when he saw the first French soldiers appear. But like Sister Anne, he could see nothing but the sun shining and the dust blowing where the fugitives stirred it up.

Fontenay chewed a bitter cud and glanced elsewhere, for he did not reckon on any such theatrical effect.

His eye happened to catch a compact crowd of Spaniards marching without excessive haste toward the main gate through a straight street which crossed the whole town. They seemed to obey a tall man whom they surrounded, and one carried a flag of the national colors. They were not running away but retiring in good order as befitted brave men forced to give way to superior forces. This was not one of Villacampa's bands, but the select battalion of Teruel's citizens, leaving homes, but bearing what was most precious—their flag.

Fontenay admired the calm valor of these men and almost wished them success in leaving the town.

At this moment, upon the ridges overtopping the highway appeared French soldiers, and the colonel, closing his telescope, said tranquilly:

"You see, my dear captain, that I was quite right in not hurrying. We can now attack without exposing ourselves to falling into a trap. Those are Suchet's skirmishers. Come, let us go and offer them a welcoming hand."

Fontenay wanted no pressing to go down in the street. There was really no time to lose, for the skirmishers were opening fire on the runaways.

All were ready in the great room, officers and privates. Through the windows they had seen the Spanish retreat. Zolnycki had taken it on himself to open all the doors and collect his men on the ground floor.

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, "now's the time to march to meet our comrades and sweep away these ragged rogues if they try to stay our advance; Forward!"

Stations having been pre-assigned, everybody knew them, and the two columns were formed in two minutes.

Fontenay was at the head of his when Tournesol, placing himself beside him, said in an undertone:

"There they run! This would be just the time to blow us up, if they had any power—but I was right, you see! the barrels were empty, captain."

Tournesol could not help this little retort to reward himself, and at any other time Fontenay might have reprimanded him to teach that a soldier may sometimes be right as against his superior but he must never boast of it.

But all he thought of was to lead the men of the 14th Foot while Zolnycki took his Polanders out by another sally port.

The colonel marched before both with the engineer captain and the sappers to demolish the barriers. They were soon at work, the men not waiting for them to finish before they scaled the broken beams and rolling stones. Never had they stepped out with so much ardor. This was rescue; they knew it and joy gave them wings.

Their goal was the gate toward which Suchet's soldiers also aimed, but it was vigorously defended, for the musketry grew warmer.

Not all the inhabitants had had time to flee and the belated ones had run against the French. These tried to hurl them back and both met an obstinate resistance.

The coming up of the garrison put an end to this unequal strife as the Spanish, caught between two fires, could not stand.

Zolnycki and Fontenay would have the honor of deciding the day, and each strained to arrive the quicker on the battle-field.

Zolnycki had taken the left with his column through a street leading straight to the gate. Fontenay chose another street branching off the main avenue, the same the party with the flag had taken. These and the French met at the cross-ways, where Fontenay charged with brandished saber on the receding foes; they fired at the column almost with the muzzles touching the mark. By some miracle, Fontenay was not hit, but his men fell all around him, and at the moment of hesitation the Spanish took advantage, not to flee, but to shield themselves from a flank fire by a corner formed by two houses. They were resolved upon being killed here and continued to shoot down the soldiers in the open.

As they were only twenty paces apart, Fontenay distinctly saw the flag-bearer and the commander: one young and the other old, but equally as brave, for neither flinched under the bullets.

The end was near. All heard the French drummers beating "the charge" before the gate assailed by Suchet's vanguard, and the Spanish defenders of it would be flung back upon the town.

"Charge, bayonets!" shouted the young captain.

As an answer to him, a voice that rose above the detonations called out in Spanish:

"Fire on the officer!"

At the same instant, a slug tore away Fontenay's cap as he was the foremost to dash into the group, but he menaced the flag-bearers so fiercely, that to protect himself, he lowered the staff to use it as a spear. With one cut, the creole severed its steel head, with a second he knocked the pole from the young man's benumbed grasp and with a terrible sweep he laid the man in the dust beside the fallen colors.

Tournesol was laying about him so savagely that no rescue was attempted, and the Spanish, pressed by the French bayonets, closed their ranks to prevent their leader being taken. He discharged a brace of pistols on the attacking party and disappeared like a stage-demon in the double flash and a cloud of smoke.

A ferocious hand-to-hand struggle ensued but could not last long, and when the West Indian could survey the scene, he was alone, almost propped up by a rampart of corpses next the wall. That of the flag-bearer stiffened at his feet.

A few Spaniards fled into the town, pursued by the victors.

For an instant stunned, Fontenay received the flag from Tournesol's hands as the latter said:

"It's yours, captain, for you took it. Keep it to show it. Such rags count in the records of service."

Fontenay had not intended to leave it there although not yet thinking of the recompense to which he was entitled from the valorously acquired trophy.

"Halloa!" ejaculated Tournesol, there's a picture embroidered upon it like on the banners carried in religious processions. These people never do anything like others."

The picture was that of the Virgen del Pilar, the patron saint of Saragossa and "Captain in the Army of Aragon," according to a popular song still sung in Spain eighty years after the War of Independence and to be sung to the end of all-time, so durable is patriotism in the land of the Cid.

The flag, which some pious nun or young and lovely

senorita had worked, was stained with blood. Fontenay thought of Marguerite's cousin embroiled in these scenes of massacre, and of Marguerite far from them all more happily, and he was filled with pity for the man he had slain. This soldier of Spain had fallen heroically; perhaps he had a betrothed who was praying for him and would weep for him. He bent down to look at him and turned pale on at last recognizing the visage, though disfigured by his sword-cut which had split his forehead.

"Diego!" he exclaimed.

"Who is Diego?" queried Tournesol. "Do you mean to say you know this fellow? Stop a bit! it's the officer with the flag of truce!"

"Yes, and the guide given me at Chamartin."

"Who betrayed you? who tried to drown us both in the Esla and stabbed you on the Benavente plain! well, he has got only his deserts, the dog!"

"What has brought him to Teruel?" muttered the captain to himself.

"Oh, the dirty sty is a nest of vipers. All the scamps in Spain have taken refuge here. I should not be surprised if we found that sham valet of Palafox's."

"Nor I," said Fontenay, in a very low tone, remembering Don Blas' daughter and puzzled if the party leader were not the man.

"Attention!" interrupted Tournesol. "Here come our lads with colors flying and drums a-beating. We've bagged the game. Teruel is still ours. General Suchet cannot be far. If we do not budge, we shall see him pass and have a capital chance to make a present to him of our flag!"

It was indeed General Suchet, surrounded by his staff, followed by the colonel and two of the captains who had defended Teruel and preceded by a vanguard company, marching in battle order to clear the way.

Caught under arms as they tried to leave the town, the Teruel rioters had been crushed without one escaping. Those who had escorted the standard taken by Fontenay, were not all dead, but the survivors had dispersed.

The general entered in triumph the town, where only an hour previously, the French were debating on the question of capitulation or rushing on death. There

were grounds for consolation here for Suchet's check on the Valence road, much exaggerated by Villacampa's unfortunate envoy. Suchet had retired in good order before superior forces and returned unimpeded into Saragossa; he dispersed the irregulars whom he met, and reinstated matters as before his baffled enterprise.

This future conqueror of Valencia was radiant. He recognized Fontenay from as far off as he could see him; Fontenay with unhelmeted head, his face blackened with powder, his coat ripped by two bullets and three bayonet thrusts, but they had not severely hurt him. He looked handsome, even more so than in Malmaison Park, when crossing swords with Commandant Carénac. This time it was for France that he had braved a hundred deaths and the master of fence had the right to be proud of the brilliant deed he had accomplished.

He was still holding the captured flag.

Suchet received it from his hands, gave it to an aide-de-camp, took from this officer's breast a cross of the Legion of Honor and held it out to the American, saying:

"I make you Chevalier of the Order, and I will report your conduct to his majesty the Emperor. When you please, you can resume your place on my staff. I am to stay three days in Teruel, and will receive you to-morrow at head-quarters."

He passed on.

Fontenay was suffocating with joy. All he had longed for was the cross. The Empress had said: "Return captain and decorated!" Now he was a captain with the war medal and could return to remind her of the promise.

"Well, captain, we've secured it," said Tournesol, in a low voice.

"The general ought to have given you the cross. Without you we should have sallied out prematurely and never have gotten through."

"I do not ask for so much. In the first place, Pélagie does not care anything for stars and crosses, while your lady-love, captain—"

"Strasburg is a long way off," muttered Fontenay, thinking of his beloved on the journey with the Empress.

General Suchet was inspecting the town with the

colonel-commanding, to see how to shield it from any new revolt of the inhabitants or descent of the guerrillas. He intended to fortify it and leave a garrison to serve as a support in his impending expedition into Valencia, and he led the engineer captain with him to point out the weak points in the wall. Fontenay, who would be out of his element on this tour, turned back into the monastery with Tournesol.

He found Carénac there, who had presumed too much on his powers and had to stay behind, much to his regret. He took comfort in learning from Fontenay that the French had won all along the line, and his joy was at its acme when the young captain showed him the cross. On learning how he had won it, the commandant fastened it on the gloriously tattered coat, which Suchet had omitted doing from the want of a clasp.

Without counting Tournesol, all there among the wounded, even those who could not rise, cheered the officer whom they liked.

After action, repose. Fontenay, who had thoroughly earned his rest, lay down. He soon went off to sleep, being worn out with fatigue; and when he awoke, all his comrades had returned into quarters, including Zolnycki, the best of all, who congratulated him and told him the latest news.

General Suchet had seen everything. The town was utterly deserted by its inhabitants. Had they succeeded in stealing out or were they hidden in their dwellings? It would soon be known, as the general commanded all to be searched, as should have been done, three weeks anteriorly when the insurrection broke out.

Meanwhile, only French soldiers were seen in the streets whom their officers had much difficulty in restraining as they burned with a somewhat natural desire to be revenged by putting the town to sack and pillage. Suchet, a great opponent of disorder, had issued the most severe orders, but he proposed expelling the inhabitants, at least those in whose abodes no arms should be found, for the law in full rigor would be applied to the others.

Searches would begin next day.

Of course the cave had been examined where the gunpowder kegs were stored and Tournesol was proven cor-

rect. The barrels were empty except one, full of that Catalonian brandy called *refino*; it was handed over to the defenders of the monastery, to the high gratification of the Poles in particular, for there was some sense at that period in the popular saying: "He drinks like a Polander."

All the rest of the day there was feasting and merry-making for the valiant garrison. Zolnycki was sober, but he remained in quarters, looking on at the sports and watching his men. Fontenay, not having his reasons to keep indoors, left him to stroll in the town about which he knew little.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PRICE OF A HEAD.

Fontenay's tour not being free from danger, he took a pair of pistols to reinforce his good sword and Tournesol, who was glad to see the sights as any modern traveler. In reviewing the places known to them, they passed along the main street where the West Indian had won the cross by capturing the standard. The dead still lay there and Diego stared at the victor. They did not pause before this sorry sight or to enter San Martin's tower where the volunteer bell-ringer had been sabered.

Fontenay had a goal, to learn what had become of Montalvan's daughter, the lovely Spaniard who was his Marguerite's living image. He scarcely hoped to see her, as the tragic death of Angel should warn her father to send her out of the town. But the West Indian expected to see the duenna and extract some clue to put him on the track of the young widow, who interested him particularly from her relation to Mlle. de Gavre. By experience he knew that the hag loved money and that napoleons would untie her tongue. Yet it seemed little probable that she had not levanted from Teruel since the day he had uselessly "oiled her palm."

The store was shut, the house hermetically sealed from roof to door-sill, and having neither the power nor the desire to break in the panels, he strolled on without too clearly knowing where else to go before his return.

All of a sudden he remembered the famous Lovers of Teruel whose legend he knew by heart from having had it dinned into his ears since he came into Spain. They reposed in the little church of St. Peter, in their natal town, into which he had never gone. The least he could do before leaving Aragon forever was to view the tomb

of Isabella of Segura, Marguerite's illustrious ancestress, if only to relate the visit to his bride on the return. He did not hope to find the fabulous treasure of the family.

This church was near Angel's house; it was in one sense far from the cathedral, being neither grand nor rich.

Fontenay only knew the exterior, but had heard that the lovers had reposed in San Pedro's six hundred years. Erudite as a Benedictine monk, Zolnycki stated that their remains were found in 1555, three centuries subsequent to their death, exhumed, and a superb monument erected to their memory on the place of discovery.

This monument was what Fontenay looked for; but it was fruitlessly that he investigated nave and quire. He did not perceive the least mausoleum and would have dropped his researches there when Tournesol showed him a cloister appertaining to the church, the arched promenade of the monks from a neighboring monastic foundation.

Fontenay entered here and finally discovered—not a tomb, but a niche hollowed out in the wall and closed by a door made of one slab; above it was engraved in the Spanish language:

"Here repose the celebrated Lovers of Teruel, Don Juan Diego de Marcilla and Donna Isabel Martinez de Segura. They died in 1217, and, in 1708, their bodies were transferred into this monument."

"Into this bin," would be more accurate, but it was, and it is the custom in Spain to shelve the dead in vaults in the wall. In the Escorial, the remains of kings and queens are not otherwise laid to rest.

Knowing this, still Fontenay was unaware that the famous lovers had been walled up after having long slumbered in a marble tomb. Zolnycki's learning was musty; Zolnycki had poorly instructed him.

It was a disappointment, and he had to give up the project of describing to Marguerite de Gavre the splendors of her ancestress' tomb.

Not at all enwrapt in the Lovers of Teruel, Tournesol smiled in his heavy mustache at a sepulcher made like a clothes-press, and did not spare some coarse jests on

the Spanish fashion of building round their departed ones, instead of burying them.

Fontenay had seen all he wanted and proceeded toward a cloister door opening on a narrow street. Tournesol took the lead, feeling uncomfortable under the dark arches and eager to stand on the pavement in the sunshine.

Less hurried, his captain sauntered with hanging head, musing on the young widow and her detestable father, also of the Segura race, but, very likely, not at all fretting himself about the mortal coil of the unhappy Isabella.

Where were they while Marguerite's betrothed accomplished this pilgrimage—truly disinterested on his part as Isabella little tormented him, and he would have preferred Marguerite's being devoid of one drop of Spanish blood? Far away, no doubt, for if the Tio were the captain of Diego, he was not the man to linger after that warning till the French resumed governing the town.

Fontenay had come to the point of resolving to dismiss them from his mind when, at the end of the arcade, he felt a hand pluck at his coat-sleeve. He turned sharply and saw a woman who seemed to have stepped out of the wall. She certainly was not the lovely widow whose fate distressed him. He was going to ask her what she wanted, when he caught a look at her countenance and recognized her.

It was the ugly old woman of the confectioner's, the abominable Carmen whom he had not seen since she had ushered him into the room where Uncle Blas' daughter offered to save his life. She horrified him, but he was not sorry under the circumstances to meet her.

He took care not to ask her in a direct way, what he desired to learn. He began to understand the duenna species, a variety of womankind unknown out of Spain. He knew that they will do anything for money and that this one would serve him for a price. In making such bargain, it would be best to let her come out with the terms.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" he drawled, with indifference. "I hardly expected to meet you again in Teruel."

"Senor, I have not gone, though nothing retains me. My poor master is no more," replied Carmen, feigning a woe not felt by her.

"The man who kept the confeteria, eh?"

"Don Angel. Yes, senor. The French killed him, that day when you came into our house. We found him dead in the belfry of San Martin's."

On this point neither Fontenay, whose sword clanked remorsefully in its scabbard, nor Tournesol required any details.

"He is dead," dolefully whined the harridan, "and I have remained all by myself in the house, for the senorita who occupied the first floor has gone."

"Really? why should she go?"

"Because she would not stay after Don Angel's taking off."

"Where did she go?"

"I do not know, senor. She did not tell me."

Fontenay foresaw this reply and he took care not to snap at the bait.

"It is a pity," he said coldly. "I would have given a good bit to see her again—more than I gave you on the day when you showed me up into her apartments."

"Senor, I know that you are generous, and I am poor—very poor. This is as good as saying that if I could serve a *caballero* like your honor, I should not want suing. But I swear to you on my eternal salvation that I am ignorant where Donna Inez is—"

"Oh, her name is Inez, eh?" negligently interrupted the West Indian.

"Yes, senor. Did you not know that? Inez de Mol-den. Her husband, colonel in the Walloon guards, perished at the siege of Saragossa."

"Then she may have gone to the country of her husband's family," suggested the captain, though believing nothing of the sort.

"Perhaps she has," replied the old woman.

She spoke freely of the husband, but not a word of the father. Studying her behavior, the captain wondered what was the aim of her falsehoods and her reticence. He was soon enlightened.

"Senor," she resumed, "more than you can think, I

deplore my inability to satisfy you, as I know that you not only would not harm the lady but would try to save her from your ferocious followers."

"Though she did not shrink from telling me she execrated the French."

"She hates your nation, senor capitan, but she has no reason to complain of you and I vow that she does not hate your honor. But I vow, too, that it is no longer in my power to conduct you to her. There is only one service I can do your honor, one that, I believe, you would not pay too dearly for by giving me a hunderd douros."

"Here we are!" thought Fontenay. "What is she going to propose? A hundred douros," he repeated aloud, "I have such a sum handy. What is it all about?"

"Suppose I deliver to you the worst enemy of the French, the high chief of the guerrillas, the man who managed the revolt of Teruel, eh, eh?"

Fontenay thinly masked a frown of disgust. He was entirely resolved not to buy with blood-money the man whom he had fought sword in hand, but yet he wished to know of whom the dreadful duenna spoke and he asked her for more.

"Perhaps you do not know his name," she said, lowering her voice; "but all the Spanish know it, and when I tell you about the bearer, you will admit that his head is worth at least a hundred douros. Your general would certainly pay more. This man is Uncle Blas, the Tio!

Fontenay had enough self-command not to show either his joy or astonishment.

"Tio Blas?" he questioned.

"The nickname of Count Blas de Montalvan, organizer of the Aragonese insurrection, King Ferdinand VII.; representative to all the juntas in revolt; the man who gives the orders to Villacampa, Pesaduro, the Empecinado and Mina himself."

The old witch might have added: "The father of the Donna Inez whom you seek," for she could not be ignorant of the senorita's being the daughter of the powerful and mysterious personage

"This is the first I ever heard of him," said Fontenay audaciously; "but if he is really as important as you

assert, his head ought to sell very dear. Are you really in a position to deliver him up to the military powers?"

"I can tell you where he is—or, better than that, I can show you him—when you count down the coin."

"Show me him? a man I do not know!"

"You can not only see him but hear him, for he is with one of his associates and by listening to their talk, you will quickly learn what he is."

"How am I to overhear them without being seen?"

"I undertake to place you so you will not lose a word of their speaking and they will not suspect you are by. You will run no risk, for you will be able to get away at any time before they could fall on you, if they did by some very uncommon fate perceive you were spying them. Then, when you make sure you are facing Uncle Blas, act as you see fit. You may run at him, and run him through, or if you prefer it, go and bring your soldiers to surround the place and arrest him. He will defend himself, I warrant you, but he will be taken."

All this sounded fair enough, and while the West Indian was repugnant to employing such measures to thwart even an enemy who carried hatred of the French to the point of assassination, he was bound by his position to learn the conspirators' secrets concerning the State, as well as tempted to know about the Gavre property and Inez's resting-place.

"How does he come to delay in Teruel?" questioned the captain to gain time for reflection on his course.

"It is not his fault," responded the woman. "He was surprised by the coming up of your General Suchet, and tried to make his way through your soldiers with a gathering of some of his followers. They were attacked before they reached the town gate; many were killed; the others hid away and they lost the flag carried by the count."

"Ha! then it was he who marched with Diego in command of the band we charged," thought Fontenay. "The affray was so short that I was not sure I recognized him. If I had, it is not Diego whom I should have cut down."

"The count has gone under cover like the others," continued the abominable hag. "He is in safety, for

nobody knows where he is, save me, and he has entire trust in me."

"Why do you betray him, then?" interrupted the captain.

"Senor, I might reply to you that a hundred dourous are always good to receive; I would rather tell you the truth—that I hate him, as much as I hate the French. For thirty years I have been serving him and abiding the occasion to avenge myself for an injury he did me."

It little concerned the West Indian in what way Montalvan had wronged the harridan, but before accepting her offer, he wished to be informed about the particulars for carrying out the plan.

"What will become of you," he inquired, "after you give him up?"

"I shall quit the town, senor. I am only a poor woman whom your soldiers will allow to leave, and by evening I can be far from Teruel."

"She will go to the gibbet elsewhere," thought Fontenay; "I have no objections."

"Senor," went on the duenna, "I have no time to lose, as the town gates will be closed at dark and I should not get away living if I were still in Teruel to-morrow. Uncle Blas' followers would learn that I had sold him and would slay me without pity. I entreat your honor to decide."

"Suppose I decide on handing you over to the governor?" suddenly said the captain to test her.

"He would perhaps have me shot, but I am sure that you, a gentleman, would not give me up."

Carmen had accurately gauged the American; he was incapable of sending a woman into death, even a duenna who betrayed her master.

"It is understood," said he after a short pause, "that you can immediately conduct me to where this man is?"

"As soon as I am paid, yes, senor."

"I forewarn you that I am not alone. My orderly is in waiting in the street at the cloister entrance."

"Is the man you call your orderly the soldier who came after you at our store on the night when our people were to overpower the French?"

"The same on which evening, he saved all our

lives." He might have added, "By guiding me to where I broke your Angel's head." But he took good care not to say this for fear of setting the wretch against him at this critical time for closing the bargain. She was meditating, and Fontenay could read on her face that she preferred dealing with him alone. She either was in very great want of the cash or heartily detested the Tio, for she finally said:

"If you are sure of this man—"

"Perfectly sure."

"Then he may accompany us as far as the door. You must leave him there, and his presence will be guarantee against an outside attack upon you. He must not enter. You will see why. You can give him orders before leaving him at his stand, but I believe it best not to tell him what you are going to do."

"I will tell him nothing. How did the idea come to you to enter this cloister? You could not know you would meet me here?"

"Certainly not, but I congratulate myself on having come since I found you. It saved me seeking you. Let us finish, senor. Time is flying."

Fontenay drew out his purse, took a rouleau of gold coin and put it in the duenna's hand, who pocketed it without reckoning. She knew human nature and did not distrust this *caballero*.

"Now senor," resumed she, "if you will be good enough to follow me, you will see the Count de Montalvan in five minutes."

Leaving the cloister, she turned to the left. Fontenay started with her and almost ran against Tournesol who had grown tired of waiting and was coming for him. Our good Tournesol was going to banter the duenna, for he had recognized her, but Fontenay closed his mouth by saying:

"Do not ask for explanations. Listen to what I am saying and punctually execute the instructions given you."

Tournesol knew how to be taciturn in great occasions. He nodded assent and to imply that his captain might rely upon him.

"You see that old witch waddling on before us?" said

Fontenay. "You know who she is. I have reasons to follow her and enter with her a house whither she leads me. You will stand guard at the door. When she comes out, let her pass and wait an hour for me."

"And if you do not come out in an hour?"

"Go in after me. You understand?"

"Pretty well, captain. But an hour is a long time, and I shall grow anxious."

"I run no danger. I carry pistols as well as my sword. If attacked, I shall make use of the fire-arms before we come to close quarters, and you can rush in to uphold me. Ah, the old lady stops. We seem to have arrived. I will go to her. Keep at a distance while I talk with her, and as soon as I go indoors mount guard, as I told you."

Tournesol had many objections to raise, but Fontenay left him before he could utter one of them.

The duenna had stood up close to the wall of a building without aperture, a completely isolated block of masonry, between four alleys separating it from other dwellings.

"This is it," she said as soon as the captain came within hearing.

"Here? I see nothing but walls!" protested he.

"But there are two door-ways. One on the opposite front, which I shall show you if you will come around the house with me, so that you may know how the man inside could get away. We are only a couple of steps from the other and I am going to open it for you. I shall go in and hand you the key that you may be sure of the power to go out whenever you like. Moreover, your soldier will guard this door until you return. You will follow me and I will leave you in a place where you can see and hear everything. That done I have no more time than to provide for my safety. You must do the rest. Are you ready?"

"One word yet! who owns this strange structure?"

"The Count of Montalvan. It was the palace of his ancestors. He had the windows walled up. The light is let into the rooms from an inner court. It is like a pie from which all but the rim of crust has been scooped. Never would anybody discover the count in it

unless I denounced him. When you make certain that he is inside, nothing will prevent you sending your soldier for others to break in the main door. You can watch this one while awaiting them. Only order him not to arrest me in going out."

"I have done that already."

"Then come, senor."

She glided along the wall, slipped a key into a cunningly concealed lock between two stones and opened a small door, its outlines at first sight blended with those of the masonry.

Tournesol watched his captain's movements with an uneasy and attentive eye, but he was a slave to duty and prepared to obey orders; consequently he did not draw near or ask fresh instructions.

Carmen passed in front and said, on handing the key to Fontenay:

"I need not advise your stepping without making noise, senor. You can get along easily as the corridor we take is lighted. The room where I must leave you is not so, but it is not doorless and you can always leave it. Besides, you are armed—"

"To the teeth," replied Fontenay not sorry to teach the guide that he was in a state to defend himself in case of attack or treachery.

"I hope it will be a useless safeguard but you did well to take it. Now, senor, have you any questions to address me? I ask you this because, henceforth, we ought not breathe a word—it would be too dangerous. When we arrive, I will point out the spot where you should stand, and retire instantly."

"I have no more to say. On!"

Fontenay, before starting, made sure by a glance, that Tournesol was at his post and he waved his hand; the Gascon would let himself be chopped to pieces rather than budge without seeing his captain again.

So far, the duenna had not deceived him. The corridor had a sky-light; it was broad enough for two to walk abreast without touching the walls, and besides, the floor was furnished with a matting which deadened the sound of footfalls. It gently rose, but as it ran a great way, probably the whole length of the building, its end

attained an elevation which corresponded with that gained by a more perpendicular staircase for the same floor in another quarter. It ended in a small room, apparently the antechamber to another of grander dimensions. These lengthy passages, to spare fatigue to the aged and infirm, are not uncommon in mediæval palaces.

On taking refuge in the home of his ancestors, Count Blas had established himself in a room, therefore, which, communicating with one street by a staircase, allowed him egress into another by this easy approach. To give light to his hold, he had the upper story removed and a transparent ceiling substituted.

Fontenay soon reached the end of the lobby guided by Carmen who stopped, laid her finger on her lips and then pointed to a recess where it was not at all light. He hesitated about entering the dark nook. She took him by the hand and led him up to a luminous point gleaming in the obscurity. At this moment, a sound of voices struck his ear and he understood the case.

The point was a hole bored in the panel separating the small room from the large one, which was supplied with windows as the sun illuminated it.

There was Uncle Blas, and not alone, for he was speaking with somebody who answered him.

The traitress had kept her word; the captain dismissed her and she hastened to beat a retreat.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THE HEAD AND FRONT OF THIS OFFENDING."

All the captain had to do was look and listen, an easy task as the partition was not thick and the gimlet hole was at the proper level. The entrance to the closet was open, for there was no sign of a door, not even hinges; probably hangings, since removed, had closed in the anteroom.

It was not time to be delicate. The emergency was one when a soldier, without demeaning himself, was bound to use his wits to gather intelligence. All is fair in war to seek to surprise a foe, and Tio Blas was the Frenchmen's most dangerous one. Fontenay had recognized the voice of the sham valet to Palafox, but with whom was the intangible count conversing? Not with his daughter assuredly as the other voice was masculine though weaker; an aged man's perhaps. With great caution, Fontenay applied his eye to the hole and was much astonished to recognize his old host at Aranda, though he had changed his attire.

Don Inigo de Barramedo, Marquez de Santa Cruz y otros locos was no longer costumed like Figaro as on the day when he had much against his will lodged sub-lieutenant Paul Fontenay in his dilapidated palace. He was clad like a guerrillero, although his age would hardly allow him to wage irregular warfare. But the captain had not forgotten his features and he would have identified him by his noble manners.

Montalvan also wore the costume of the Aragonese peasant insurgents; a red and yellow handkerchief rolled up into a loose rope and wound round the head, short buff leather breeches held up by a violet sash, and blue woolen hose coming down into those hempen sandals called *alpargatas* by the Spanish.

Thus equipped, the Count de Montalvan was fit to scour the mountains with his bands and no doubt he waited for the chance to join them, for his weapons lay on the table on which he rested his elbow, namely, two brace of pistols, a blunderbuss—that used at Somo Sierra—and a *cuchillo de Pamplones*, or Pampeluna knife, which might be the one sharpened for the Emperor Napoleon and used upon the West Indian in the Rue Saint Nicaise. This arsenal indicated that he did not intend prolonging his stay in Teruel and would not have been here now only for his failure to break out.

All seen by the creole confirmed the duenna's sayings. After receiving her thirty pieces, the female Judas had conscientiously delivered the master whom she sold. She had not mentioned the Marquis of Barrameda—throwing him into the bargain.

What was he concerting with Montalvan?

Teruel is far from Aranda, and he certainly had not left home to fight.

He spoke slowly and gravely in that fine Spanish tongue seemingly created for invoking God. Montalvan replied to him in pure Castilian which he enunciated "with open mouth"—*con los labios, caimios or ore rotundo*, as the ancient Romans said.

Fontenay took pleasure in hearing it, although he stood upon burning ground. The state of things could not continue, though nothing pressed him to act, retreat being open through a doorless passage; but by prolonging it, he hoped to learn many things, the personal one most interesting him who was an American first, and after that, a French soldier. What had become of Marguerite's cousin, Inez de Molden? There was as yet no allusion to her.

"Those dolts would not hearken to me," said Uncle Blas. "They gave the French time to fortify themselves in the monastery, when they ought to have attacked them on the first day, carried the house at any price and exterminated them. When our fellows made up their mind to finish with them, it was too late. They lost some more hours in summoning them to surrender so that Suchet came up. I had warned them."

"And now heaven only knows how we shall get out of

Teruel!" sighed the old marquis. "These fiendish French are likely to search your mansion. One blunder will be enough to ruin us. Are you sure of Carmen?"

"Yes! well, as much as one can be sure of any of the sex. The Aragonese proverb is true: 'Trust *alpargatas* and women, and you will go barefoot to the grave.'"

"But, in short, my dear count, if the French should come to our door would we have time to flee?"

"There is another way, a secret one, on that side, reached by the back of this room. If they appear, I will at least hold them in check while you get the start of me in flight. I am going to be killed rather than be taken by these *gavachos*. Here is the means of sending some to the undying flames. I think you will imitate me, Senor el Marquez."

"Rely upon me, my lord," said the old noble, drawing himself up to his full height. "I know how to die, and at my age, it costs but a faint pang to lay down life. Yet it is hard—hard to leave Spain in its dying state."

"Spain is immortal. Her sons will defend her as long as one remains and the day will come when they will drive the invaders from her."

"It is their Emperor who should be cast down."

"I did my utmost toward it."

"Yes, I know that you went into France to try to rid us of the tyrant who will end by subjugating the whole of Europe; but you could not approach him."

"He escaped me by an incredible mischance. I had him almost under my knife when a man threw himself between to intercept the blow. I slew him, it is one the less—but all the work is to be recommenced since Napoleon lives."

If Fontenay hesitated to have this blood-thirsty creature shot, the atrocious speech should have removed any scruples. The wound which he owed to the speaker, began to sting as if to spur him to an attack upon him.

"But I shall try again," proceeded the Tio. "I have friends in Paris, even among his courtiers, and I shall finally get within arms-length. I succeeded last year in entering his country-seat of Malmaison and recovering the property of my unfortunate relative which would have gone into French hands."

"I knew of that and also that you have made a good use of it."

"Yes, I distributed the whole of the cash among the five war-parties under my orders. There does not remain a single doubloon of the sum which I luckily drew from the bank of Madrid before the French seized it."

Had the speaker known that Marguerite's intended husband was listening, he might have enjoyed the pleasure of tormenting an enemy. But, if he had seen him, he would have perceived that he had too lofty a heart to be seriously affected by a blow only hurting his material interests. Paul knew that the noble girl whom he loved would console herself for a loss of money and he would prefer to marry her poor.

Nobody could accuse him of seeking her millions since she had nothing but lands—we might say, "castles in Spain," a land where property in a Frenchwoman's name was then a chimera, and would perhaps always be so.

The Count de Montalvan was a thief, purely and simply, none the less.

Attempts are made to excuse political assassinations, but Fontenay had never heard justification of thieving through patriotism. He heard it now from a venerable nobleman, the finished pattern of Castilian honor, who had not once derogated from the traditions of his race in all the course of a long life consecrated to his country's service.

"Count," said Don Inigo, "I should have blamed you if you had kept the fortune. I praise you for having employed it to maintain the defense of Spain. I am quite sure that your daughter, Donna Inez, also approves."

"I have not consulted her," said the other abruptly. "I would to heaven I had never seen her since she became a widow!"

"What do you say? Donna Inez is a saint and a heroine. At Saragossa she was standing beside her husband when he fell dead in the breach. Good blood is ever true. You ought to be proud of her."

"Do you know what she did, here, in Teruel? To save a wretch of a French officer who presumed to go into her presence, at the time when the revolt was about to

break out, she betrayed the secret which that luckless Angel had the imprudence to confide in her."

"She—a Montalvan!"

"If she did not betray it to him, she let the Frenchman escape, and warned of the danger, he ran to convey the alarm to his leaders. I was up in the Albarracin Mountains, then, along with Villacampa—happily for her; for if I had witnessed what went on here, I believe I should have killed her."

"Who told you what happened?"

"Carmen. Carmen is devoted to me and she has a Spanish heart."

The listener in the side room would have smiled at the fanatic's blind truth, if the situation had been less terrible.

"Have you questioned Donna Inez?" inquired the old marquis.

"I did not wish to see her, and I will see her no more until we drive the French out of Spain. She will have to enter a nunnery at Tortosa, which is still ours. I will take her there if I can contrive to get out of Teruel to-night."

"Where is she?"

"In a hiding-place known alone to Carmen and me. She is in safety and the French will never find her."

"We'll see about that," muttered Fontenay, more than ever resolved to save Marguerite's unfortunate cousin.

"Had I cut my way out, this morning," proceeded Don Blas, "my daughter would have remained under my faithful Carmen's guard; she would have procured a peasant's garments and on market-day, she might have gone out mingled with the mob of women returning into the country. We were repulsed by the French, who out-numbered us. My bravest companions have fallen at my side. One whom I loved above all, the *licenciado* Diego Perez of Segovia, was slain so near me that I was drenched with his blood. I have been compelled to take refuge here, with no hope of cutting my way out by main force. We have no alternative but to flee in the night, for which I have the means. Carmen knows a secret way which ends in the ditch running out under the town wall. We will use it—you, Inez, Carmen and

myself. I know where to join Villacampa and when I shall have encloistered my daughter at Tortosa, I will take command again of our dispersed guerrillas. We will drive the French away or die for Spain."

"I shall die, my dear count," gravely said Don Inigo, "for I am not of the age when one is lucky in war. But the sacrifice of my life was made beforehand when I left Aranda to bear you that letter from our great leader, Mina. I knew I should never return home but I do not lament undertaking the journey since I have fulfilled my commission."

"Oh, that you had arrived two days sooner! Suchet's army was still afar and you might have got out of Teruel. I would have had you escorted as far as Mina's outposts; he was near Leride yesterday. Now, it is too late."

"Well, we run the same risk. I pray heaven to save you who can fight for your country, and Donna Inez de Molden, who, I persist in believing, has nothing for which to blame herself."

"God be her judge!"

After this laconic and far from encouraging reply of Uncle Blas, the dialogue suddenly ceased. Fontenay had heard enough of it. He knew all he wanted to learn about these two men, and if he had pity for Don Inigo de Barrameda, he was less than ever disposed to spare the fanatical regicide of the Rue Saint Nicaise, the burglar of la Malmaison, the persecutor of his own daughter. Endearing as Inez was, still he meant to encloister her for a generous deed which he treated as criminal weakness.

Fontenay was fixed upon handing him over to military justice. But how arrest him without at the same time arresting the old nobleman whose evil star had brought him into Teruel only a few hours before Suchet's soldiers? Fontenay could not warn him to seek safety and anyway, the valiant marquis would undoubtedly refuse to profit by the warning.

And our gallant fretted about the young lady to whom he owed his life on the day of the outbreak. What would become of her when her father was taken prisoner? Before all, where was she? Montalvan spoke of a hiding-place known only to him and Carmen. He had not

said whence he reckoned to remove her in the coming night afar from the town, by a passage to be pointed out by Carmen. If she did not return, the projected escape was impossible, and Carmen, in departing, had declared to Fontenay that he should nevermore see her. Left to herself, Inez would perhaps perish of hunger.

The captain began to regret having embarked in this adventure which could not come to a happy end. The hour fixed with Tournesol, approached fast. As soon as it should elapse, the obedient Gascon would come to see why his officer had not reappeared. He would rush in like a cyclone and on the alarm, the two Spaniards would not fail to throw themselves on their hostile neighbors in the dark closet. There might not be a door but the panel would give way like one. Then would ensue an engagement with pistol and blunderbuss, probably terminating badly for the less well-armed French.

Fontenay's best course was to go noiselessly to join his man before settling on a definitive step, but he was startled out of his reflections by the Count de Montalvan's voice saying:

"Hark!"

Fontenay, looking, saw him on his feet, his hands on his pistols, listening sharply. Don Inigo had risen also and stretched out his neck like a perplexed listener. A distant noise came up through the panel to Fontenay as well; dull knocking and confused clamor.

"It sounds like breaking down a door," he muttered.

He was not wrong; it was another door than that watched by Tournesol. The duenna had mentioned another on the side of the house, and Don Blas had alluded to it. A door at which he glanced, probably led out upon the main staircase conducting to it. This one was so fiercely attacked that it would not long resist; shouts, indeed, were soon heard within the court-yard.

"The French!" muttered Don Diego.

"We are betrayed," said Uncle Blas; "but we have another issue. This panel is a sliding one! come!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RAPIER AND SABER.

Fontenay raised his pistols, but feared he was lost. He could hardly hope to bring them both down with the double shot and in that hole he was a fair mark for the comprehensive blunderbuss. But already the intruders had found the staircase and were trying the grand room door. Fontenay heard vociferations, some shots splintering the wood-work, and one detonation almost as resounding as a cannon-shot. It was the blunderbuss, pouring its contents through the assailed door. Shouts of pain and rage arose and several musket balls crossed the room and split the panel as Don Blas opened it for his friend to leap into the recess. As his eyes met those of Fontenay, the latter fired his pistols on the two and flung them, smoking, into the face of the count, who, spying him, was disconcerted in his aim.

Fontenay receded, but already Don Inigo fell upon him and with dying hand embraced his arms and body to prevent him drawing his sword.

"Strike him!" he groaned to his friend, recognizing his guest at Aranda, "strike him down! he is French!"

With a desperate effort, the captain dashed down the enfeebled arms; but he was free too late. Between him and the opening where he had expected Tournesol to appear, Blas de Montalvan had bounded and with the strong pull of his long arms he quickly drew down an iron door running in grooves up and down like a portcullis. It closed at the bottom with the snap of a spring, in the face of the orderly on the other side.

It is true that the caged Fontenay might have sprung through the yawning panel; but in that other room the French soldiers were groping with their bayonets in the

smoke and he would probably be slain before he could make himself known.

A hoarse laugh recalled him to the full comprehension of the position.

With his back against the iron door, Don Blas stood at bay; he had discharged his pistols as well as the blunderbuss, for he only held the pameluna knife and a long, thin but strong Spanish rapier which he must have detached from some unseen niche in the wall. Who but the owner of the house of the Montalvans would know its resources so intimately?

This attitude made the whole scene very much resemble a duel, and at once the West Indian swordsman felt clear, cool and at ease. Yet the burning eyes of the Spaniard, identifying him with the spoiler of his sport of king-slaying, would have appalled a veteran like Carénac.

The combat was without seconds but in a brief space the soldiers in the other room would burst in, sooner than Tournesol had any hope of doing through the metal barrier.

At the first meeting of the blades, Fontenay recognized that he had never more occasion to tax all his resources of nerve, agility, quick invention and strength of wrist which had won him the fame of the Master of Fence. His antagonist was what fencing-room slang denominates a "demon."

Not content with warding off the saber cuts with the serpent-like blade, he used the poniard according to the obsolete school of the mediæval times—when the Italians, at least, believed all tricks worthy of praise that won the fray.

Twice the captain parried thrusts that so closely ran along his stouter blade that a curtain ring would have encircled them both, and each time his right shoulder was pricked. Twice had he replied with strokes that would have stretched the count beside the senseless Don Inigo but for the double defense of the knife and the rapier. A third time the sinuous weapon traveled around his ribs; but, entangled with his coat, failed to be withdrawn, and he snapped it in the *forte* close up to the

exquisitely chiseled hilt with a sudden spinning round on his heel.

Don Blas retreated to the wall, in the darkest portion, between the iron door on which Tournesol madly kicked and the open panel where several soldiers' heads and muskets appeared. Beyond a doubt, having no idea of a friend here, they would fire on the combatants, and the Spaniard grinned at the prospect of being so oddly revenged.

"Not by any hand but mine!" shouted the West Indian, his eyes now ablaze and his warm brown complexion glowing like bronze.

Seizing his saber with both hands like a lance, he rushed at the smiling enemy.

At the very moment when the knife just touched the impaling steel, Don Blas' left hand disappeared behind him to execute a juggler's sleight, and the wall opened and shut like a monster's jaws. Carried on by the impetus, Fontenay's charge brought him violently against the closed shutter of a window which he had not suspected. A laugh resounded without, but was immediately followed by a shriek of dismay and baffled rage in the same voice. A volley of musketry pealed forth below him; the street, above which on a balcony he so imprudently presented himself, was crowded with French soldiers and they could not have had a plainer mark.

Fontenay, who had torn the shutter open with his hand and sword, was in time to see the shattered corpse of the head of the Montalvans topple over the railing and descend as the spirals of smoke came up. He recoiled, for he would have also received a platoon's fire in the next instant.

In the other direction he was equally as much endangered, for bayonets were bristling against him. Fortunately they were the Polanders commanded by Zolnycki, who hastened to cry out:

"Hold! it's the captain, our brother!"

He had the muskets held up, and he said:

"I see we arrived in time. Who is that pounding at the door, though? is it more Spaniards eager to meet us?"

Fontenay explained that it was probably his orderly,

who was presently welcomed when the means of raising the fallen door were discovered.

"One here, one below," said a lieutenant, "but they have killed five men. The fellow who leaped out of the window began the battle, for the order was to take him alive. The colonel wanted to question him. It appears he was 'the great gun' of the guerrillas."

"Who denounced him to the colonel?" quickly inquired Fontenay.

"A villanous old native woman, who must have been in the brigand's service, for she knew the house as well as her pocket. She made it clear to us how we ought to act so that he could not escape."

"She even advised me to kill everybody found in the house," continued Zolnycki; "and I do not know how you and your orderly were not both shot down in the scuffle."

"I will explain what I was doing here," whispered Fontenay in his friend's ear.

"Oh, you cannot be accused of being an accomplice of this man whom you laid at your feet and the other whom you drove out of the window."

"Never mind. Is that duenna below?" went on the creole to the officer of the 14th line regiment.

"Yes, captain, unless she has made off with what she saw of it. She told the colonel that the Spaniards would flay her alive if she stayed at Teruel and he signed a pass for her to go out. My order was to detain her until we captured the rogues whom she pointed out. I handed the pass to my sergeant who is watching her in the street."

"I hope he has not been such a fool as to give it her!" exclaimed the West Indian.

"So do I, captain," muttered the officer, a little crest-fallen, for he began to fear that he had committed a folly in trusting too much to his subordinate.

"Where is your sergeant?" inquired Fontenay.

"Before the great door which we had to batter down, captain, commanding the man guarding it."

Zolnycki intervened. He divined that Fontenay had private reasons for attending to the duenna, not for the

lieutenant's ear, and he came to his aid by saying to the latter:

"My dear comrade it is important that the colonel should be informed as soon as possible of what has happened here. I leave the command to you and will make my report to him for him to proceed farther. I will take Captain Fontenay also to inform him. Awaiting farther orders, surround the house by sentinels to prevent anybody going in or coming out."

"Very good, captain."

Zolnycki and Fontenay went down into the court-yard, where Don Blas lay upon his back, riddled by bullets; in his clinched hand he still clutched the haft of the broken knife which had threatened the life of the Emperor Napoleon, and after once nearly killing Fontenay, failed to protect his own. Some holes in the wall, whence stones had been detached, in a line up and down from the balcony, indicated that but for the soldiers on the alert, the formidable guerrillero chief might have descended to the yard without breaking his neck.

Tournesol followed the two officers without being hindered; all seemed to admit that he and his captain should be inseparable.

"Did you recognize that miscreant?" inquired Fontenay of his brother-officer.

"The dead man still grasping the haft of a knife? I own that I did not look hard at him."

"That is the false valet of Palafox."

"Really! Are you sure?"

"Yes, my friend, that is the villain whom we escorted into France, where he attempted to assassinate the Emperor. It was he who slew your brother at Somo Sierra—I regret that the soldier shot him!"

"Because you did not slay him by your own hand?"

"No, he ought to have been hanged as a rascal—a thief! If you only knew all he has done!"

"I know enough not to lament for him. But here's the sergeant, and the duenna is not with him. Let me question him."

Interrogated militarily, the sergeant stated that he had handed her the pass and she hastened to depart. He had heard the fusilade and a wounded man had told him

that the Spaniards were all killed. The duenna implored him, saying that the people of Teruel would tear her to pieces, and he let her go.

Zolnycki reprimanded him for form's sake, for it was the lieutenant's fault, and besides the Pole did not attach any great importance to the horrible hag's flight.

Fontenay was furious and was compelled to explain to his best friend. On the way beside him toward the colonel's quarters he related all from his last visit to Angel's confectionery on the evening of the insurrection to the meeting with Carmen under the cloister arcades of San Pedro.

Tournesol at the regulation distance could not hear it.

Zolnycki listened to his junior as usual with benevolent attention and as usual also was wisdom itself speaking.

"My dear friend," he said, "I can explain your anger but not associate myself with it. All is well done that heaven does. This duenna ought to have been hanged high and dry over the house door where she led the soldiers to give up her master and also, I do not doubt, to have you killed by them. She hoped in the tumult of the attack and the darkness of the room whither she conducted you that you would be taken for a Spaniard and treated as such."

"I did not think of that," muttered Fontenay beginning to understand Carmen's conduct. "Now I believe with you that she meant to destroy me. She took good care not to tell me she was going to warn the colonel. It was I who ought to have gone there, and I wish I had, for I wanted to save the inoffensive old nobleman who perished with this Montalvan."

"It was his destiny, and, I repeat, heaven does everything well. It is one enemy less for France, and you have not to reproach yourself for his death."

"No; it is not he I am sad about, but this young lady who so strongly resembles Mlle. de Gavre, and is probably her relative."

"I understand her interesting you, though perhaps she does not merit it. But no misfortune has befallen her that I know of. The fate her father reserves for her has

no attractive features. Do you believe she will pine in the convent where he intended shutting her up?"

"But where is she?" interrupted Fontenay.

"Hidden somewhere not easily discovered; this Montalvan said before you. It follows that she has nothing to fear."

"He added that he alone, and the duenna know this place of concealment."

"Well, neither will betray her. Montalvan is dead; the duenna no longer in Teruel and not likely to return—"

"And Donna Inez will die, starved in the cavern where they shut her up, and whence nobody can liberate her."

"Oh," said the Pole, who had not any such idea, "you fancy an unlikely accident. Things do not happen in the Old World as in romances and on the stage. I saw in Paris a play entitled *Les Victimes Cloîtrés*, but as for your guerrilla's daughter being walled up alive—"

"You forget that we are in Spain, that Montalvan did not foresee his being killed, and that his faithful duenna is capable of all crimes."

This retort appeared to make some impression upon Zolnycki.

"Indeed, anything may happen in this infernal country," he said after reflection. "But if really the young lady is consigned to some dungeon we should have her out. You are well aware, my dear Fontenay, that, by the general's order, all the houses of Teruel will be ransacked from top to bottom to-morrow. It is a vile work that no officer cares to direct; but I will volunteer for it. Do not doubt it will be accorded me, and you may believe that the search will be conscientiously made. I will not leave one cellar unvisited. Nothing prevents your joining me."

"I thank you with all my heart and I accept," quickly said the creole. "If we do not find Donna Inez, as I believe we shall, it will because she has been able to leave her prison and the town. Perhaps Carmen may aid her. This duenna is a monster, but what will she not do for money? she has betrayed her master for a hundred duros, but she knows her master's daughter is rich and nothing proves that she has used that pass to reach

the country. She would rather sell it to the *senora*, who would pay her handsomely for it when in possession of her father's property."

Fontenay drank in his friend's encouraging words and when they reached the quarters, he no longer in the least despaired of saving Marguerite's cousin.

The following days resulted in nothing to confirm Zolnycki's optimistic forecast, for the house-visits only resulted in discovering some unfortunate insurgents in hiding. Suchet, who was humane, was content to expel them from the town. Cellars and underground holes were found, but no recluse, or even the passage under the outer wall through which Montalvan was to have fled with his daughter, the *duenna* and the unfortunate Don Inigo.

Once recovered from his early uneasiness, Fontenay gradually grew to believe they were exaggerated, that the widow had not died most dreadfully, that she lived in some village of Aragon where the French would never go to her and even that a day would come when she would remember that Marguerite was her cousin and had never been her enemy.

In any case, Fontenay was glad to quit the town where he had gone through so much emotion.

On receiving the flag which his young captain had captured, General Suchet announced that he would soon recall him on his staff. When the call indeed speedily came, he bade adieu to his comrades, the brave and kindly Zolnycki, his brother-in-arms and by affection, and many others who had become friends since he shared their dangers.

In transmitting the order, the colonel hinted that it was a step on the return journey into France of the young captain who was entitled to six months' furlough. So Fontenay marched away with a light heart, not without again visiting the quaint tomb of the Lovers of Teruel, and he took with him Tournesol, still more delighted.

He did not know what the future held in store for him, but, whatever happened, he had not, as the old-fashioned folk say, "eaten his cake before the bread."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNITED AT LAST.

On leaving Teruel in June, 1809, Paul Fontenay fully believed that he had finished with Spain, and yet he was at Saragossa two months afterward.

General Suchet had recalled him on his staff only to retain him there, so thoroughly was he satisfied with his manner of serving him. He would have hastened to pack him off into France, had he been discontented. So matters go on in armies—and elsewhere too much merit injures a man. The prizes are for average men.

Fontenay bore his burden patiently, because he rather often received letters from his friend George de Prégny and sometimes from Mlle. de Gavre; but what consoled him for inability to return to Paris was the fact of his fiancée not being there. She had accompanied the Empress to Plombières, with no more prospect of passing the end of summer at la Malmaison than of the Emperor's return. After his dazzling victory of Wagram, he was waiting at Schoenbrunn for Austria to accept the peace he imposed.

On the 18th of August, after four months absence, Josephine again saw the chateau preferred by her above all the imperial residences, because it reminded her only of pleasant events.

She did not find happiness there again, although nothing was changed in appearance. The park was still as fine, the gardens as blooming, and the court as brilliant. But Napoleon wrote seldom and although he styled her "*Mon amie*" or even "*Ma tendre amie*," and never ceased to be affectionate, his laconic notes little resembled the burning epistles he dashed off to her during the first campaign in Italy, in 1796.

The more deeply the good Empress was saddened and fretted over the change, the more closely she attached herself to the young reader who took the greatest share in the sorrows she had divined, without venturing to speak of them. Marguerite was so exclusively her favorite that the ladies of the palace felt some jealousy.

Josephine found pleasure in leading the girl to speak of her beloved and her grief at not seeing him. She had no secrets from her patroness, touched by her love and charmed by her simplicity. It was sweet to encourage her hopes while seeking to soothe her, and she would repeat that Paul Fontenay, retained by duty, was not free to return as quickly as he wished.

She had not told her that he was decorated with the cross of honor, although she had learnt this fact from the war minister; she wished to reserve a surprise for his arrival; and as Paul was so modest as not to acquaint his betrothed with the news, Marguerite believed that he was prolonging his stay to win the token which the Empress had resolved to include among the wedding presents.

The heat was excessive during this glorious summer of 1809, and Josephine who suffered from it, although she dreaded the cold more, often strolled under the park trees for coolness, without her suite, like the lady of the house eluding her guests to enjoy the loneliness of the groves; but she never missed taking her dear Marguerite.

On one of the later days of this burning August, her reading-lady was seated by her on a grassy seat before the colonnade of that miniature Temple of Cupid where, one November afternoon, Carénac had awaited the West Indian master of fence to fight a duel having a most unforeseen sequel.

Why should the Empress make this corner her goal, when she seldom visited it from the time it took to walk to it? Knowing her Sovereign's heart, Marguerite forefelt that it was to speak of her absent darling, and she was not mistaken.

"Do you remember?" inquired Josephine, pointing to the mead extending from their feet and the copse where they had come by surprise upon Paul measuring sword blades with the terrible fencing-master.

Marguerite did remember, but she was too agitated to utter all she felt.

"You have only seen him once since I betrothed you," observed the Empress, "it was when he had just escaped the death braved to save Napoleon from an assassin's poniard. God hath protected him. You will see him again and in captain's uniform."

The girl sighed, and Josephine interpreted the sigh as meaning that he was slow in coming.

"You will see him sooner than you think. I hear that he has quitted Spain, and if nothing has delayed him on the road, he may now be in Paris."

"Oh, madame, he would come straight to la Malmaison!" exclaimed Marguerite.

"He is coming. I am expecting him."

"To-day, do you mean?"

"In an instant. Look! there he is!"

Mlle. de Gavre raised her eyes and saw Paul advancing, hat in hand. His gold epaulets and his silver cross shone in the sunlight. His countenance was darker than when fresh from under the West Indian sun. His figure was more developed and he seemed to have increased in height. But he still had his winning and expressive features, gentle black eyes and kind smile. He was beaming with joy and not at all agitated. He kissed the Empress' hand and was going to treat his betrothed to the same salute when the imperial lady said mirthfully:

"No, no! I am looking the other way! a husband returning from the wars need not stand on ceremony! not that you are quite her husband yet, my dear Paul, but before a month you will be, and I hope Napoleon will sign the marriage-contract. He knows that I made the match and he will approve your union."

The young couple stood hand in hand after the kiss, pale with joy and dumb with rapture.

"You need not relate your adventures in Spain to me; resumed the Sovereign, "for I know them, my dear Paul, and that you have nobly borne yourself. Our poor Marshal Lannes gave testimony to that before dying so heroically at Essling. Since then, General Suchet has recited the deed of daring which won you the cross.

But it was not he who narrated your non-success in saving Marguerite's property."

"I wrote about that to George de Prégny," muttered Fontenay.

"And M. de Prégny showed me your letter. I informed the Emperor of the vexatious adventure, and he authorized me to provide the marriage-portion for the daughter of one of his bravest generals fallen on the field of honor. Our dear Marguerite will not have the fortune stolen from her by that man, but I have assured her future—and yours. You can enter with your acquired rank into the Emperor's household unless—"

Josephine did not complete the sentence, but Fontenay divined the thought suddenly striking her. She had thought of the impending divorce and foresaw that, if this misfortune alighted on her, this son of her girlhood's friend would have to choose between Napoleon's brilliant staff, and the melancholy court of the repudiated Empress.

"While awaiting his return," she resumed, forcing a smile, "I attach you to my personal staff. One of my three grooms-in-waiting is absent, and you shall replace him. As my dear reader may provisionally retain her function by me, you can see her daily."

Marguerite was dying of desire to fling herself at her benefactress' feet to thank her, but Josephine rose. The audience was over. It had been prepared to give her the pleasure of witnessing the meeting of the lovers whom she meant to unite. On arrival in Paris, Fontenay had found a note inviting him to be at three o'clock before the temple of Cupid in Malmaison Park, in full dress, and not to see anybody in the interim.

Fontenay had guessed all with the clear head of his race and took care not to miss this imperial appointment or the caution, for he had not called even upon de Prégny. Tournesol had helped him don his handsome uniform, ornamented by the knight's cross of the Legion of Honor.

"You need not go upon duty until to-morrow," concluded Josephine. You are free to-day. Tell M. de

Prégny that Mlle. de Gavre will soon be styled Madame Paul Fontenay."

Deeply moved, the captain took leave, crossed the park, stepped into the post-chaise, waiting on the road, and was whirled to his friend's house.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FONTENAY'S ST. HELENA.

Orestes and Pylades were united, after more than once fearing they would never meet again.

Fontenay emptied his budget of news, as the familiar expression goes, and it came George's turn to do the same by retailing Parisian gossip. All had greatly changed since Paul's departure. The season in society had been dull. No one was at the Tuileries, no one at St. Cloud, and the Empress came alone to Malmaison. And the Austrian campaign, victoriously terminated by Wagram, had opened with the murderous and indecisive battle of Essling. Napoleon remained six weeks on Lobau Island before renewing the crossing of the Danube, successfully at last, and during that long spell, the most ominous rumors had reigned in Paris. Malevolent newsmongers ran about proclaiming that the Emperor was a prisoner there with his army, and that the second war with Austria would end with disaster. To confirm the alarmists, letters from Vienna stated now that Napoleon was attacked by a mortal malady or an assassin. Whispers ran that however great a man may be, his life hangs on a thread and that the destiny of France was at the mercy of a dagger-stroke or a fit of fever.

The Empress could notice in her familiars symptoms of disquiet and disheartenment.

Fontenay did not foresee matters so blackly. He believed Napoleon invincible, and the future was rose-tinted since his interview with Josephine. The chatter of idle Parisians fell short of him. He inwardly considered that the auditor rated it too valuable, and he hardly listened.

He grew more attentive when his friend spoke of the

likelihood of their patroness' disaster. George feared she deceived herself about the Emperor's intentions. In principle the divorce was decided upon, and Napoleon's delay in returning sprang from his ambassador to Vienna. Talleyrand, arranging in concord with Prime Minister Metternich of the Austrian monarchy, the alliance of Napoleon with an arch-duchess. All would soon be concluded, and poor Josephine would have to yield her place to a foreigner. She was letting herself be lulled by sweet speech. The awakening would be dreadful, asserted George, who asked Paul what he would do on the day when he must choose between the powerful Emperor and the dethroned Empress.

Without hesitation the American replied:

"Neither my wife nor I will ever turn from one who has assured our happiness—one who was my mother's friend and born where I drew breath."

"Then you would throw up your military prospects."

"Without a pang. I have paid my debt to your Emperor and France. I have the right to retire into private happiness."

"That would be a pity, for you might be a general at an age when many vegetate in the inferior ranks in spite of fine records of service; yet I approve. Indeed, after such a year in Spain, you ought to be sick of fighting."

"No, indeed! and I will astonish you by confessing that I long yet for the life of perils. Once having tasted it, it is hard to shake it off."

"Your wife will convert you to wiser ideas," returned the other, laughing. "I can understand your fondness for warfare. In the new world you are born strugglers with man or nature, and if you had not entered the army, you would have developed into a duelist—in token of which, remember your affair with that commandant; it was without common sense, and it is lucky it turned out so well. What I cannot understand is your sorrowing for a land where the people fight with knives and kill prisoners in cold blood."

"Suppose I tell you that while I hate the Spaniards, I consider them heroic—"

"Because they valiantly defended Saragossa? I do not

dispute that, but their abominable cruelties spoil their heroism—cruelty is in their blood—perhaps coming from the Moors they torture soldiers captured alive and their own countrymen suspected of being friendly to the French, not even sparing women."

"I do not know of any fact in support of the reproach you cast on them."

"Well, I know one at any rate which I found in the *Journal de l'Empire*, and likely to interest you as it took place in Teruel, where you went through such terrible adventures. Listen to my reading the paragraph, which is not a long one."

The auditor took up from the table the most widely circulated periodical of the time—no larger than a pocket handkerchief—and read aloud, with emphasis on several passages:

"Our troops forming the garrison of Teruel, a pretty town in Aragon, have just made a painful discovery which bears witness again to Spanish barbarism and fanaticism. In demolishing a house in the way of the defenses, our sappers found the entrance of a subterranean passage ending near the cloisters of San Pedro's Church; in a cell, of which the door was fastened on the outside, lay the remains, partly gnawed away by rats, of a young and richly attired Spanish woman. Some towns-people identified her as the widow of a colonel killed at Saragossa in the Spanish service. From the inquest held upon the strange find, the certainty is acquired that the unhappy creature was inclosed here by her parents to die of hunger, because she had befriended a French officer at the time of the riots."

"Well," said George, laying down the newspaper, "will you maintain that these people are not savages? What is the matter with you?" he proceeded, for no answer came. "Does the story impress you? I should have thought your stay in Spain had surfeited you with horrors."

"Not with those in which I am concerned—in spite of my wish," faltered the captain, deeply agitated.

"What do you mean? is the story true?"

"The only truth is the young lady's dreadful death."

"Do you know her then?"

"I spoke of her to you when I returned, in April last. That is the widow I saw in Saragossa praying upon her husband's coffin."

"I remember; but I was not aware you had met her again in Teruel. What was she doing there?"

"She saved my life by warning me that the Spaniards were going to rise and massacre us."

"And that is why her tender parents doomed her to death?"

"No; that is not how things came about. Her father was stern with her; he purposed immuring her in a nunnery at Tortosa, not killing her—but he was himself killed and as he alone knew where she was temporarily incarcerated—"

"She remained there to die of hunger? I pity her."

"Pity me, too, for I shall never console myself for not having saved her. I went with our men to hunt for her but we found no trace. I believed she had succeeded in getting out of the town, and I was almost instantly recalled to Saragossa by General Suchet."

"I can see that you were much interested in her!"

"Not as you seem to hint," retorted Fontenay testily.

"Yes, yes, I know that you loved, and love Mlle. de Gavre, but—"

"The dead woman is her cousin—"

"Oh! how is that?"

"She is the Count de Montalvan's only child."

"The thief! the regicide! Now I pity her less. Why, when you were just now relating the siege of Teruel, did you say not a word of this episode?"

"Because I was not thinking any more about it. I believed Donna Inez saved and did not worry as to what had become of her. I also said nothing to you about an infamous duenna who caused all this woe by betraying the Tio. Rumor came to Saragossa that the guerrilleros had shot her for it."

"For once they acted properly. I suppose you have no intention of mentioning this Donna Inez to the future Madame Fontenay."

"No; and I enjoin you not to name her."

"I should have taken care. However perfect girls are, they do not like others of their sex praised for beauty

by their intended. Besides, where's the good? her fortune is squandered, and the scoundrel who despoiled her has been punished. I do not see that anybody but Fouché would take any interest in the story of that bandit's end."

"I am not going to tell him."

"I see—you bear him a grudge. Well, I can assure you that he has reversed his opinion about you, for he sings your praise in town and at the court."

"I am exceedingly obliged to him," said Fontenay disdainfully. "At changing opinions, Fouché is a practiced hand. Was he not Robespierre's friend and accomplice?"

"Before he was Napoleon's minister," observed Prégny. "He would also be minister to King Louis XVIII., if ever royalty is restored to France on behalf of the Bourbons. But I do not want to talk to you of the transformations of this chameleon. I merely wish to inform you of his disposition toward you. You had better have him for friend than foe. I do not know whether I ought not to add that in this veering round of the weathercock I see an evil portent for our beloved mistress' future. He endeavored to ruin you because she protected you. If he lays down his arms, it is because he fears her no more. He must know from a certain source that the divorce is settled upon."

"It will never be eradicated from my mind that this man betrays the Emperor and willingly allowed the assassin Montalvan to escape. At Teruel, I heard this Montalvan boast that he had allies in the very circle of Napoleon's friends."

"No doubt he lied, although Fouché's behavior was as strange that time as in the affair of the infernal machine. He was hand and glove with people who knew the culprits and yet he did not denounce them. He was surrounded by Chouan leaders who served him as spies, and not to be suspected of complicity with them, he had one shot from time to time. But you have nothing more to fear from this personage. We have talked quite enough about him. Let us go out for a stroll on the Feuillants terrace, for it is the hour when it is fashionable to show oneself. We may meet friends, whom you

can acquaint with your marriage; it should be the news of the day, to-morrow."

"Why do you counsel me to make such haste?"

"In virtue of the principle that you should strike the iron while hot. I know that your fiancée will not revoke—or the Empress; but the Emperor might change his opinion, though scarcely would he dare to oppose a marriage proclaimed by flourish of trumpets, or what amounts to the same thing, by all the idlers of Paris."

"The Emperor can do everything and dares do everything!"

"I meant to say that he would look at it twice. But we are discussing hypotheses, and that is very useless. Believe me, my dear Paul, we ought to take a walk. The open air will freshen up your ideas."

The two went out, and, on the corner of the Rue de Rohan, halted on seeing Jean Tournesol coming up on the other footway; he walked with hanging head, stooping shoulders and swinging arms, like a man overwhelmed by a sudden blow.

"Some misfortune has befallen your man," remarked Prégny. "He is quite downcast."

"So it is, though I cannot guess what," muttered Paul. "I ought to follow him and learn where he is going so miserable."

"I hope not to the river to drown himself!"

They crossed the street and hurried on to overtake Tournesol who did not see them; he was talking to himself.

"Oh, women, women!" he grumbled, "you are all alike! no better here than in Spain! they pile up their vows to you—you go away supported by them and—one, two! go! the wind shifts and when you return, you find your place taken by another! a soldier of a line regiment! a march-in-the-mud regiment! and all because he belongs to the Imperial Guard. Oh, Pélagie! Pélagie, oh!"

"Pélagie," repeated Fontenay, suppressing his laughter at this cue to the distress.

"Captain, is it you?" exclaimed Tournesol, stopping short, and for once, in his surprise, forgetting to salute.

"What did you say about Pelagie? the grocery-woman, is it not? Has she gone over to the majority?"

"Not to the major, captain—only to a corporal—she is married to a grenadier corporal of the Old Guard! a grizzled-mustache! a licensed grumbler! I would not so much care if it had been a dragoon-guard, for it would still be in the cavalry! No, the widow must stoop to the foot and the 13th Cuirassiers are jilted! it is humiliating!"

"What else did you expect, my hero? no good ever comes to the absentee!" said the auditor, doing his utmost to restrain his laughter.

As a lover himself, the creole sympathized with Tournesol in his grief.

"Just imagine, captain, that I went to the grocery in the Rue des Orties; I had brushed myself up and looked spick and span, as you see! over the door was another name on a new sign! and at the cash-desk was a strapping old griffin in his shirt sleeves and a fatigue-cap—where I always wore my helmet—and he asked me if I wanted any pickles? Pickles! I said I wanted the store-keeper, which he said he was! she—she was his wife!"

Here George exploded, and Fontenay could not but laugh a little.

"This so upset me that I stuttered out something like: 'Oh, tell her it is of no consequence!' and I sneaked out. He started to run after me, thinking it a hoax, but he saw I was not afraid of him, and he returned to serve the customers."

"Perhaps it was her head-man and he was joking with you," said Fontenay charitably.

"No, it is really her husband. I inquired among the neighbors. He was wounded at Essling and shelved into reserve. He belongs to Paris and he captivated Pélagie on his return home. They have been six weeks married."

"Pooh!" said George merrily, "you will make a better match yet, my honest fellow."

"Oh, I am comforted already. I feel that the grocery business would not suit me. I will stay by my captain and we will deal in hard knocks."

"Unless I leave the army," interrupted Fontenay.

"Why, captain, you would never do that!"

"I hope not, but if circumstances compel it, I trust I

shall not be parted from you. You have served ten years; you can obtain your discharge, and I will give you an occupation agreeable to you—head groom over my horses."

"Good! I understand," exclaimed the Gascon, "you are going to marry the young lady who reads stories to the Empress. *She* has no sordid trade ideas!"

"I am happy to say, none!"

"So, captain, we are not going back into Spain? That suits me. I have had enough of the place. The wine is not bad, but there are altogether too many knives."

"Some can be met in Paris," retorted Fontenay lightly, as he pointed to the Rue Saint Nicaise.

"But the brigand is dead who gave you one cut, and he was a Spaniard. All those villainous doings are over. Ah! it will be sweet not to have to ask first thing in the morning if my captain is going to be killed before night?"

This outburst sprang from the heart and clearly expressed the feelings of the brave and modest soldier who had always taken more care of his officer's life than his own. Fontenay thanked him in such kind words that when the faithful Gascon left the two friends, he no longer thought of the treacherous Pélagie.

Happiness cannot be described and the month before Fontenay's wedding was a series of enchantments. The betrothed followed the Empress from la Malmaison to Saint Cloud, where their union was blessed in the Chateau chapel, in the beginning of October.

The Emperor was still in Vienna, and the ceremony lacked his presence—but Tournesol looked on in his full uniform as a cuirassier, and the small boys at the palace park gates cheered him quite as heartily.

The Emperor had not required pressure to send his consent to his staff-officer's marriage, and the cordiality of the act conduced to supporting Josephine's illusions; she still flattered herself that the divorce was not irrevocably resolved.

That wedding-day was the last of her happy ones.

In truth, all was finished in France as regarded her, and on the 16th of December, 1809, she quitted the Tuileries, into which she had entered on the 19th of

February, 1800, amid the acclamation of the people of Paris and the first soldiers of the world.

She went to la Malmaison, reaching it at close of day. It poured in torrents and the ground was strewn with dead leaves. What a night for Fontenay and his young wife, trying to soothe the Empress in her sorrow.

They were ever-faithful to her and followed her to the death. Courtiers of misfortune, they were at her bedside on the ultimate day, uniting their prayers with her children's when she yielded up her soul to heaven on Pentecost Sunday, May the 29th, 1814, at la Malmaison.

The Empire had collapsed; France succumbed under the number of all the peoples whom she had vanquished. The Allies occupied Paris.

Fontenay could dwell there no longer.

He departed with Marguerite for America. He bought a house and land by the seaside in Martinique, near Trois-Hets, where he was born and the future Empress of the French passed her childhood.

Tournesol followed them, without regretting military service or his country where he had no kin or landed estate. Gascons accommodate themselves to all latitudes, and he soon became acclimated to the Antilles, where his good humor and varied accomplishments made him the delight of the negroes, who are only "children of a larger growth."

This lovely colony prospered, then, though ruined since, and the colonists grew rich. Fontenay arrived with six hundred thousand francs with which the Empress had endowed his wife. Active and intelligent as he was, and "a native to the manner born," he soon tripled his capital by superintending his own plantations.

He never longed to revisit France, the 1814 and 1815 invasions weighing upon his heart. Napoleon had died at Saint Helena and his family were in exile. Fontenay remained faithful to the memory of the great Emperor whom he had served in Spain. Marguerite had nobody to love but her husband and her son, and it would have given her pain to see Paris again, full to her of memories of her benefactress Josephine. Nothing was missing for her gentle and affectionate soul! What should she seek in France? her life flowed on like a limp

brook under the ever-blue sky, at the foot of the ever-green hills, among the flowers—adored by all around her. Never having liked society or noisy pleasure-making, Marguerite de Fontenay soon became accustomed to creole manners and home-happiness sufficed her.

Neither she nor her husband thought of claiming the real estate in Spain which legitimately belonged to her; they acted sensibly, as it would not have been restored to them. Ferdinand VII. had reascended his throne, and on his side of the Pyrenees, Count Blas de Montalvan, the martyr of the independence, was venerated like a saint. The ex-staff-officer of Napoleon would have wasted his time in commencing a suit against the Spanish government which had seized the Tio's property since his tragic end, and meant to keep it.

George de Prégny, going over to the Government of the Restoration and marrying a wealthy woman, lived long in years; he was wise and able.

Poor Carénac was a colonel when a cannon-ball slew him at the foot of the grand redoubt in the battle of the Moskowa. Like him, Zolnycki finished, fighting the Russians during the Polish Rebellion of 1830, but he had become a general in the National Army, and he died for his native land as he had always yearned to do.

Tournesol peacefully laid down his life at Martinique, his master having died, comparatively young, in his own house, and the last of the Seguras having followed her beloved mate closely to eternal repose. In their colonial life, not an untoward event had disturbed their ways—far less an occasion to call out the skill and courage—dormant, not extinct—of Fontenay the Swordsman.

THE END.

